

# **WISCONSIN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

- **State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2005 - 2009**
  - **Title IV-B**
  - **CAPTA**
  - **Adoption Chafee Foster Care Independence, and**
  - **Tribal Child Welfare State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2005-2009**
- **Annual Progress and Services Report for FFY 2004**

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services**

**June 2004**

**Child and Family Services Plan**  
**Annual Services and Progress report**  
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## **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR TITLE IV-B, CAPTA AND CHAFEE**

### **Administering Agency for IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee**

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Division of Children and Family Services  
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The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (Department) is an umbrella agency headed by a Cabinet-level Secretary. The Department has responsibility for the human service program areas of child and family services, mental health, developmental disabilities, substance abuse services, long-term support, aging services, medical assistance, and public health, among others. The Department organizational chart is attached to the plan.

The Department has delegated authority from the Governor's Office, as the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, to submit the Child and Family Services Plan and sign the required federal assurances.

Children and family services are located in the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS). DCFS is the unit within the Department responsible for Title IV-B Subpart I (Child Welfare Services), IV-B Subpart II (Promoting Safe and Stable Families), Title IV-E (Foster Care and Adoption Assistance), Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV).

### **DCFS Organizational Structure**

The Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) manages the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs and is responsible for supervising Wisconsin's child welfare program, including prevention, child protection, foster care, adoption, and independent living services. Services are delivered primarily through county- and tribal-administered child welfare programs, except in Milwaukee County and for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) which are operated by DCFS. BPP operates the SNAP and other adoption services, including special needs adoptive placements, adoption assistance, paternal interest registry, and adoption search. Adoption services are provided using regional offices statewide and in Milwaukee through the Milwaukee adoption program. BPP also manages the Kinship Care Program, Runaway Services and Homeless Youth programs, Domestic Violence programs, Community Service Block Grant, and other programs.

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) directly manages child welfare services in Milwaukee County, the state's largest county. The state-administered services

in Milwaukee County are delivered using DCFS staff for intake and initial assessment functions in partnership with contracted service providers for in-home safety services, ongoing case management, adoption, and foster home recruitment, licensing and training. BMCW delivers child protection, foster care, adoption, kinship care and independent living services in accordance with state policies established by BPP.

The Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning (OPEP) coordinates planning at the state level and is responsible for federal data reporting, program outcome monitoring, and state preparation for the federal Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) and Title IV-E Review.

Quality assurance activities are managed jointly by several units. BPP and BMCW have quality assurance staff that monitor program activity for the state Adoption Program and in Milwaukee County, respectively. Department Area Administration staff in regional offices are also involved in child welfare program quality assurance on behalf of DCFS.

The Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL) is responsible for licensing child placing agencies, group homes, and residential care centers for children and youth and provides technical assistance regarding licensing. BRL also licenses group childcare centers.

The DCFS Bureaus and Offices coordinate all activities under the Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee programs. DCFS staff work together to develop, implement, and monitor federal and state child welfare policies and programs. Their shared knowledge of state, county, and tribal government agencies, private organizations, and local community resources supports comprehensive planning and programming across the full continuum of state and local child welfare services in Wisconsin.

The DCFS organizational chart is attached to the plan.

### **Programs Included in the Child and Family Services Plan**

This Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 Child and Family Services Plan establishes new state priorities for child welfare program services for the period of FFY 2005 - FFY 2009. This "five-year" plan includes Titles IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, Chafee CFCIP and ETV, Adoption, and Tribal Child Welfare. The five-year plan identifies objectives for improving child welfare program services and describes how federal IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee funds will be used to accomplish the priorities in the plan. The plan also includes objectives for the Adoption Program, including how federal Adoption Incentive funds are used, and priorities for coordinating with the 11 federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin on Indian Child Welfare services.

The plan provides information on the objectives and implementation activities related to Child Welfare Services, Safe and Stable Families program services (Family Support, Family Preservation, Time-Limited Reunification Services, Adoption Promotion and Support Services), CAPTA program services, Chafee Independent Living and ETV

program services, Adoption Program services, Tribal Child Welfare issues, and services related to permanency planning.

The plan includes the Annual Progress and Services Report describing activities through the current year, FFY 2004, for the IV-B, CAPTA, Chafee, Adoption, and Tribal Child Welfare programs. The plan also includes a progress report on achievement of the objectives established in the previous five-year plan for FFY 2000 - FFY 2004.

The DCFS operates under a comprehensive plan that establishes the priorities, strategies, and goals to carry out its mission. All requirements of 45 CFR 1357 are included within this plan.

### **Relationship to Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**

Wisconsin underwent the federal CFSR with a state assessment completed in June 2003, an on-site case review conducted in August 2003 and the federal CFSR report received in January 2004. To address the issues identified in the CFSR, Wisconsin formed a Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Core Team in September 2003 to begin work on a comprehensive plan to improve child welfare practice. The Core Team and other processes utilized for PEP input included counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other child welfare stakeholders. The work of the Core Team and other input resulted in the development of the Wisconsin PEP that was submitted for federal approval in April 2004.

During the PEP process, DCFS worked with stakeholders to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Wisconsin child welfare program and opportunities for improving the effectiveness of child welfare services. The strategic planning process used to identify improvement strategies for the PEP was also used to identify objectives for the five-year Child and Family Services Plan. Through this planning process, seven overarching values were identified and all of the state objectives for the five-year plan are organized based on these values. The specific action steps identified in the PEP for implementation over a two-year period are included in the plan along with long-term activities for child welfare program topics not related to the scope of the CFSR.

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## **II. DESCRIPTION OF WISCONSIN CHILD WELFARE SERVICE SYSTEM**

The child welfare service system in Wisconsin is primarily a county-operated, state-supervised system in which the state oversees the program and provides policy direction and partial funding and county human or social service departments provide child welfare services to children and families. Counties also contribute local funding to the program. Tribes are involved in child welfare services directly and may also have written agreements with county agencies.

Two facets of the child welfare system are state-operated, including the adoption program for children with special needs by the Bureau of Programs and Policies and child welfare services in Milwaukee County by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

County agencies and other service providers, such as community based organizations, provide a wide variety of services to children and families. These services include programs designed to strengthen families, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, and support and preserve families affected by abuse and neglect.

Child protective services include the investigation of child abuse and neglect, in-home safety services, and the removal of children from the home where necessary to protect child safety. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Children's Code, governs abuse and neglect reporting and protective services and includes federal CAPTA requirements. The assessment and treatment of abuse and neglect and the removal of children from their homes are performed by child welfare agency staff based on statutory direction and state standards.

Children enter foster (out-of-home) care through two primary routes: protective services and juvenile justice. Out-of-home care placements include temporary shelter care, family foster care, treatment foster care, group homes, and residential care centers. All out-of-home care providers must be licensed and pass criminal background checks.

Protective service entries into out-of-home care occur as a result of abuse or neglect where removal of children from the home and placement into out-of-home care is necessary to protect the safety of the children. Caretakers can also seek voluntary placements for children for services related to developmental disability or physical or mental health issues requiring special care. Intake of children into care is done by child welfare agency staff with court approval. Chapter 48 of the Wisconsin Statutes also governs protective service and voluntary placements.

Juvenile justice entries result as youth display uncontrollable behavior (such as running away, truancy) or commit criminal offenses that result in a delinquency adjudication. Intake of youth into care is done by child welfare agency staff or by juvenile court staff, depending on the local administrative structure. Chapter 938 of the Wisconsin Statutes, also known as the Juvenile Justice Code, governs status offenses and juvenile delinquency.

While children are in out-of-home care, child welfare and juvenile justice agencies are responsible for permanency planning. Permanency goals include reunification where possible, adoption, guardianship, placement with a relative, or other living arrangements (i.e., long-term foster care, sustaining care, or independent living). Children in out-of-home care who are eligible for adoption through the termination of parental rights and who have special needs or are “hard to place” are referred to the state special needs adoption program where children are matched with adoptive parents. Adoption assistance payments are made to persons who adopt children with special needs. Older children who are likely to age out of out-of-home care receive independent living services to help them make successful transitions to adulthood.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program is designed to help children make the transition from out-of-home care to self-sufficiency. The Wisconsin program is based on the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the findings of the June 2000 Wisconsin study entitled “Independent Living for Children in Out of Home Care.” The BMCW, counties, and tribes receive Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds to operate local service programs. Independent Living services focus on helping youth learn daily living skills, achieve a basic level of safety and well being that includes sufficient employment, housing, income, and education, and remain connected to caring adults and their communities for ongoing support. Program eligibility guidelines target youth aged 15-21 who have been in out-of-home care placement (e.g., foster home, group home, residential care center, or court-ordered Kinship Care) at least six months after the age of 15 years or older or adopted after the age of 15. Eligibility for Independent Living services ends when the youth turns 21 years of age.

The Kinship Care program is a financial assistance/child welfare program funded under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. BMCW, counties, and tribes operate Kinship Care programs. The Kinship Care program was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. The Kinship Care program is often utilized as a child welfare service to allow children to remain living within their extended family structure. Kinship Care may be used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives as well as child welfare placements with relatives where the court has found a child to be in need of protection or services.



### **III. CHILD WELFARE OBJECTIVES FOR 2005-2009**

Wisconsin's five-year strategic objectives for improving child welfare services are reflected in this section of the plan. The objectives are organized based on seven overarching value statements. Under each value statement is a list of specific actions or initiatives that are or will soon be underway in partnership with counties, tribes, other departments, agencies or systems, consumers, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders connected to the child welfare service system. DCFS will implement these initiatives during the period of 2005-2009, with the implementation guided by the seven values.

The initiatives reflect the program range of child welfare and family services activities for which DCFS is responsible, so many of the initiatives are not directly related to the use of federal IV-B, CAPTA and Chafee funds. The specific initiatives were developed through several processes. The list includes items from the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) submitted for federal approval in April 2004, Governor Doyle's Kids First agenda to invest in the future of children released in May 2004, and the Tribal Child Welfare Issues completed in February 2004. Other actions were identified as priorities for the CFSP by DCFS working collaboratively with counties, tribes, and other stakeholders that participated in the PEP Core Team that developed the PEP. The source of each item is identified in parentheses.

For initiatives that involve federal IV-B, CAPTA or Chafee funds, more details about specific actions are described in Section VIII of the plan. More information about other initiatives is described in other documents:

- The PEP plan can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.
- The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.
- The Tribal Child Welfare Issues are attached to this plan.

#### State Objectives/Values Statements

##### ***1. Help families strengthen their capacity to provide safe and nurturing environments for their children:***

- Develop criteria, policies, and procedures that are designed to increase use of relatives as placement resources. (PEP-H)
- Enhance the role of non-custodial parents and other family members as placement resources by developing policies, procedures, and tools as well as increasing staff training to support efforts to locate, adjudicate, and involve non-custodial parents. (PEP-I)
- Reduce family violence by: (Kids First)
  - Improving coordination among law enforcement, child welfare agencies, corrections, and victim service agencies to effectively assess risks and respond accordingly.
  - Expanding Safe Haven sites, which provide a secure environment for visitation or transfer of custody of children.

- Seeking legislation to permit judges to impose a penalty enhancement to a criminal sentence if the perpetrator of domestic violence committed violent acts in front of children.
- Promote family-focused child welfare case planning by implementing the values and philosophy of coordinated service teams, revising the *Child Protective Services Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines*, developing policies and procedures, and amending pre-service training for staff and foster parents. (PEP Team, DCFS)
- Ensure culturally competent child welfare practice by recruiting and retaining bilingual and bicultural staff and foster and adoptive parents; incorporating cultural competency into existing training and developing specialized courses in assessing for cultural needs; and collaborating with organizations that serve culturally diverse client groups. (PEP Team, DCFS)

***2. Improve Wisconsin's capacity to provide quality foster care to children when they cannot be safe at home:***

- Stabilize placement of children in foster care and reduce re-entry and placement disruptions. (PEP-C)
- Maintain and support family connections by updating and implementing policies that promote sibling group placement. (PEP-E)
- Increase the effectiveness of support for foster parents by:
  - Enhancing pre-service and continuing training and technical assistance. (PEP-K)
  - Establishing a foster care resource center that provides telephone support and referral, training for foster care coordinators, and increased training for foster parents. (PEP-K, Kids First)
  - Developing a Foster Parent Handbook. (PEP-K)
  - Clarifying roles and responsibilities of foster parents and facilitating their participation in court hearings. (PEP-P)
- Sustain a recruitment campaign that is consistent with the AdoptUSKids national initiative and designed to achieve a diverse ethnic representation of foster and adoptive families. (Kids First, CFSP)
- Improve the foster care reimbursement structure by:
  - Increasing the basic maintenance rate. (Kids First)
  - Revising the rate structure (e.g. supplemental points, sibling group incentives, use of the exceptional rate). (PEP Team)

- Implement a subsidized guardianship program in Milwaukee with potential expansion to other counties. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Finalize adoptions for children needing permanent homes by providing permanency consultation, improving the timeliness of finalized adoptions, and evaluating the array and effectiveness of post-adoption services. (DCFS)

***3. Strengthen and diversify the child welfare workforce and build our capacity to serve families and keep children safe:***

- Establish minimum pre-service and foundation training requirements for child welfare caseworkers and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Develop additional options for county and tribal access to child welfare training, including use of technology and supplemental training providers to meet training requirements for staff and supervisors. (PEP-R, Kids First)
- Identify and address ongoing training needs related to WiSACWIS. (PEP-R)
- Evaluate the caseload and workload of child protective services staff and supervisor to caseworker ratios. (PEP-T)
- Research the factors contributing to turnover in the child welfare workforce and implement strategies to improve staff recruitment and retention. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Produce a Child Welfare Policy Manual for child welfare staff. (PEP Team)
- Increase efforts to develop and support supervisors. (PEP Team)
- Meet with Schools of Social Work to establish a match between current curriculum and Child Welfare Training Partnership's foundation training to further refine equivalencies and/or criteria for exempting staff from required training. (PEP-R)

***4. Assure that the expectations of families and actions of child welfare professionals are guided by clear and comprehensive policies and standards of practice:***

- Improve the safety of children and the efficiency of and consistency among child welfare programs statewide by defining the scope of CPS cases and the intake and assessment standards that guide caseworkers. (PEP-A)
- Update the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Standards and Practice Guidelines* on safety assessment and safety planning to help children remain safely at home. (PEP-B)
- Develop a policy to require a concurrent permanency plan no later than the six-month permanency plan review to move children more quickly to permanency. (PEP-D, PEP-O)
- Integrate the foster/adoptive family assessments into one and distribute the new assessment tool to counties for use in licensing foster and treatment foster homes under Chapters HFS 38 and 56 and for the Adoption Program. (PEP-D)

- Promote interaction among family members and siblings by developing and implementing policy on family visitation and interaction. (PEP-F)
- Improve compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) by building DCFS capacity to implement ICWA and ensuring that all parties in the child welfare system are aware of and comply with ICWA requirements. (PEP-G, DCFS)
- Revise the *CPS Ongoing Service Standards and Practice Guidelines* regarding family assessment and case planning and convert family assessment practice guidelines to standards. (PEP-J, PEP-N)
- Develop and implement a policy on caseworker-parent/family face-to-face contact. (PEP-J)
- Work with children's mental health professionals and county and tribal child welfare agencies to develop a statewide policy for mental health screening, assessment, and treatment and develop a treatment capacity improvement plan. (PEP-M)
- Develop policies (Chapter HFS 44) relating to reasonable efforts to return children placed in out-of-home care to their homes when appropriate and safe or be placed in permanent and stable alternative living arrangements. (PEP-N)
- Implement the DCFS child welfare legislative agenda (including WiSACWIS confidentiality, further implementation of ASFA, TPR process improvement, and other priority legislation). (PEP-O, Kids First)
- Increase the DCFS capacity to provide technical assistance to local child welfare agencies to support improved case practice, policy implementation and regional collaboration. (PEP-S)
- Review the current use of "substantiating" child abuse and neglect and its ongoing practicality in Wisconsin's child welfare system. (PEP Team)
- Review the CPS role in non-caregiver maltreatment. (PEP Team)
- Develop a process and protocol for conducting egregious incident case reviews. (DCFS)

***5. Collaborate with agencies and systems to improve family access to services that ensure children are safe and healthy:***

- Pilot a managed care program in Milwaukee that will provide every child entering foster care with mental, physical, and dental health care. (PEP-L)
- Assess the capacity of the Wisconsin child welfare system to respond effectively to the safety and permanency needs of children. (PEP-T)
- Expand MA eligibility for youth exiting out-of-home care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health insurance coverage. (Kids First)
- Increase Independent Living Program scholarships to \$5,000 per youth per year as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. (DCFS)

- Help youth transition to self-sufficiency by continuing to provide an array of services and supports that address secondary and post-secondary education, vocational and employment training, daily living skills, housing, connection to caring adults, health education, and risk prevention. (DCFS)
- Build Independent Living Program capacity to provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other supports and services to former foster care youth aged 18-21. (DCFS)
- Strengthen coordination with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) on W-2 (TANF) services to families involved in the child welfare service system. (Kids First, PEP Team)
- Establish multi-agency work groups with other agencies and service systems to improve service delivery to children and families. (PEP Team)
- Improve mental health services for children served by the child welfare system. (DCFS)
- Improve availability of and access to AODA and other services for birth parents. (DCFS)
- Increase community awareness of the child welfare program in Milwaukee. (DCFS)
- Collaborate with the Department of Corrections (DOC) on services to juveniles and their families. (DCFS)
- Expand Chafee Foster Care Independence and Education and Training Voucher programs to include the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe. (DCFS)
- Sustain the partnership with counties, tribes, advocates, consumers, and other stakeholders to improve child welfare outcomes through membership on or other involvement with: (DCFS)
  - Child Welfare Program Enhancement Implementation Team
  - Milwaukee Partnership Council
  - Citizen Review Panels

***6. Improve the quality and usefulness of information needed to evaluate safety, permanence, and well being of children:***

- Develop a policy for processing multiple CPS reports for the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment. (PEP-A)
- Improve the management of child welfare information systems and reporting of child welfare program data. (PEP-Q, DCFS, PEP Team)
  - Obtain federal certification of WiSACWIS system.
  - Integrate management of WiSACWIS system into DCFS.
  - Develop a WiSACWIS training program.
  - Develop child welfare program performance indicators.
  - Support local agency use of WiSACWIS data reports.
  - Improve quality of federal AFCARS and NCANDS reporting.

***7. Assure the quality and effectiveness of services for children and families by regularly reviewing our programs and practices:***

- Establish a child welfare quality assurance (QA) program to improve practice and accountability. (PEP-Q, Kids First)
  - Agency review using CFSR-style case reviews and peer reviewers.
  - Coordination of statewide and Milwaukee QA processes.
  - Program reviews and special studies.
  - QA feedback into policy development.
  - Technical assistance to child welfare agencies from DCFS.
- Create an ombudsman for children in the Milwaukee child welfare program. (Kids First)
- Ensure compliance with federal and Legislative Audit Bureau Title IV-E eligibility reviews. (DCFS)

## **IV. ANNUAL SERVICES AND PROGRESS REPORT**

### **Progress on Objectives in 2000-2004 Plan**

The DCFS established several objectives in its Child and Family Services Plan for 2000-2004 supporting the quality, timeliness, and responsiveness of child welfare services across Wisconsin. These objectives addressed the following responsibilities:

- Clarify and strengthen permanency planning responsibilities;
- Increase support for kinship care and foster care providers;
- Increase the number of special needs adoptions; and,
- Support child welfare practice within the BMCW.

The information below summarizes progress made toward achieving these goals, activities for the upcoming year, and any revisions made to further support attainment of these goals. The special needs adoption objective is addressed as part of the Adoption Program progress report.

### **Permanency Planning**

State statutory changes designed to bring Wisconsin statutes into full compliance with the IV-E eligibility requirements established by the federal IV-E rule issued in January 2000 were adopted as part of 2001 Wisconsin Act 109. Act 109 was effective July 30, 2002, and contained a number of provisions affecting Wisconsin child welfare and juvenile justice law, including provisions to improve the programmatic implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA).

Act 109 included the following provisions related to permanency planning:

- Reasonable efforts to achieve the goals of the permanency plan (REPP) finding  
Provided clear statutory authority for courts to make REPP findings and established that the finding must be made within 12 months after the date the child is removed from the home and every 12 months from the date of the previous finding.
- Termination of dispositional orders  
Removed the requirement that the dispositional order be extended on an annual basis for children in out-of-home care and instead required that a Permanency Plan Hearing be held every 12 months from the date the child is removed from the home. This change addressed problems under prior Wisconsin law where delays in extending dispositional orders could result in delays in reviewing permanency plans.

Counties were instructed on implementation of Act 109 via DCFS Numbered Memo in August 2002. An initial round of six regional trainings on Act 109 targeting child welfare and juvenile justice supervisors was conducted in September 2002. Additional training on

Act 109 for county agency directors and child welfare and juvenile justice supervisors has been incorporated into a two-day training on “Supervisory Practice Under ASFA.” Ten sessions of this training were offered beginning in Fall 2002 and running through Spring 2003, after which the training will continue to be offered annually by the Training Partnerships.

The DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Corrections presented two workshops on Act 109 at the Annual Judicial Conference in October 2002, a half-day training to juvenile court clerks in October 2002, and a workshop at the Wisconsin Juvenile Court Intake Association Conference in September 2002. Also, six regional trainings on Act 109 targeting judges, court commissioners, and attorneys were conducted in December 2002. In addition, DCFS is working with the Director of State Courts Office to include Act 109 and IV-E eligibility issues into ongoing judicial education programs.

As a result of Act 109, new court forms were developed and issued by the Director of State Courts Office during September 2002 to incorporate the requirements of the new legislation. DCFS is working with the Director of State Courts Office to follow up on the use of the new court forms by counties statewide.

The DCFS has developed a draft administrative rule related to permanency planning and reasonable efforts known as Chapter HFS 44. This rule establishes state policies that have the force of law related to the requirements for assuring that reasonable efforts are made to prevent a placement, to reunify a child with his or her family, or to achieve another permanent placement for the child. The rule also describes the processes and practices related to conducting administrative hearings (i.e., permanency plan reviews).

The DCFS received substantial input on the administrative rule from a variety of agencies and will conduct public hearings as the draft rule proceeds through the rule process. Currently, a diverse committee representing both child welfare and juvenile justice is examining the most recent draft of this rule. It is anticipated that the rule will be submitted for legislative review in 2005.

The DCFS is working with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections to determine how the draft rule will apply to juvenile justice clients in out-of-home care. When the rule is promulgated, the DCFS and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will issue a joint communication to counties.

DCFS has also developed state standards and guidelines for the ongoing case management of all child welfare cases, including out-of-home care cases. These standards and guidelines address case planning and services for children and families while children are in care. The standards and guidelines are designed to complement the permanency planning administrative rule as well as the *CPS Investigation Standards*. After lengthy comments and input from county agencies, these standards and guidelines were issued in May 2002. The standards and guidelines for ongoing case management are expected to improve permanency outcomes for children and reduce lengths of stay in care.



A statewide template for permanency plans was implemented in the WiSACWIS system in Fall 2002. This template provides a consistent format for doing permanency plans. Many counties are using the paper version of the template for permanency plans prior to their implementation of WiSACWIS.

## **Support for Kinship Care and Foster Care Providers**

### Kinship Care

#### *Program Description*

The Kinship Care program is a financial assistance program funded under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. The program was initiated in 1997 when the Non-Legally Responsible Relative (NLRR) component of the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was terminated. The Kinship Care program is often utilized as a child welfare service that assists children to remain within their extended family structure.

Kinship Care may be used to fund voluntary living arrangements with relatives as well as child welfare placements with relatives where the court has found a child to be in need of protection or services (CHIPS). The basic eligibility requirements are:

- that there be a need for the living arrangement
- that the living arrangement is in the best interest of the child
- that court jurisdiction for a child or juvenile in need of protection or services exists or would exist in the future if the child were to remain with his or her parent(s).

The Kinship Care program is administered locally. County agencies, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and 10 tribes determine initial and ongoing eligibility and make monthly payments in the amount of \$215 per child per month to eligible children and caregivers.

#### *Program Activity*

The Kinship Care program caseload has remained relatively steady, with about 8,000 children receiving a monthly TANF payment. Of the current caseload, about 1,400 children are in court-ordered Kinship Care (COKC) placements with relatives subject to permanency planning and ongoing case management and 6,600 children are with relatives on a voluntary basis. In many instances, COKC cases become voluntary cases if the child is permanently placed with the relative and the court order is ended.

DCFS implemented in November 2000 an administrative rule known as Chapter HFS 58 to support statewide consistency in basic operating procedures regarding the use of the Kinship Care program and the quality of care provided to children placed or otherwise living with relatives under this program. During 2002, Kinship Care roundtables were

held with county and tribal staff to provide training and discuss regulations and ongoing practices. Direct technical assistance continues to be provided to individual programs as requested.

In July 2002, 2001 Wis. Act 109 was enacted which included provisions clarifying permanency planning requirements for COKC Kinship Care cases. In Milwaukee, BMCW has done permanency plans for COKC cases since 1998. In the balance of state, those counties that had historically not done permanency plans for COKC cases were required to complete plans by the end of CY 2002.

Kinship Care payments are made by counties, BMCW, and several tribes which participate in the program. To comply with federal TANF reporting requirements, the BPP implemented a data collection system to establish baseline program information and utilization trends. That data system initially involved paper-based reporting from local agencies, but BPP converted the reporting process to a web-based system in November 2001. As counties implement WiSACWIS, they report Kinship Care cases on WiSACWIS. The Kinship Care data system will continue to be used by tribes, at least unless and until tribes utilize WiSACWIS.

Finally, to promote a young person's transition to independence, Kinship Care program eligibility was expanded to support care of youth up to 19 years of age if they are attending school, are in good academic standing, and are expected to receive a diploma. This age limit is now the same as foster care.

The TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers remains at \$215 per child per month. This amount has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. DCFS remains committed to the prior plan goal of providing increased support to kinship care providers. This includes working to improve the financial assistance and other support provided to relative caregivers.

While the statewide Kinship Care caseload is relatively constant, caseload does fluctuate within individual counties. Counties and tribes receive a sum certain annual allocation based on prior caseload counts. In some instances, counties may place children on a wait list for Kinship Care payments until funds become available. DCFS has developed a process to help ensure that more eligible families are able to receive payments while residing in communities where a funding shortage occurs and wait lists are implemented. DCFS analyzes the current year data for each agency, and shifts funds from programs with under-spending to programs with waiting lists and/or over-spending prior to year's end.

### Foster Care

DCFS recognizes the critical link between the success of a child served within the child welfare system and the supports provided to those who care for these children. As such, the DCFS has identified key supportive, financial, and programmatic strategies to support and enhance the quality of Wisconsin's foster care service.

### *Supportive Services*

DCFS will continue ongoing work with foster parents, adoptive parents, foster youth and foster care coordinators to identify other areas and services to support the foster care system. DCFS is currently in the process of establishing respite care policies for foster parents. Previously, in the administrative rule on licensing treatment foster homes, the DCFS identified standards for the amount of respite a treatment foster parent must be provided and created qualifications for individuals who provide respite services to children in treatment foster care.

DCFS implemented revisions, effective March 2002, to the family foster care licensing administrative rule known as Chapter HFS 56. In the rule revision, the DCFS established qualifications for individuals who provide respite for children in family foster care. Recognizing that Wisconsin counties may or may not currently have formal respite programs for their foster parents, the rule revision does not include standards for the amount of respite for family foster care. Rather, the DCFS will use an advisory committee comprised of foster parents, county child welfare staff, and others to develop a policy issue paper that will outline standards for the provision of respite care services. The creation of a model Foster Parent Handbook will include sample respite policies to support the provision of respite services to foster families.

Child care funding under the Wisconsin Shares child care program is available for working foster parents and relative caregivers and children needing specialized childcare services. The Wisconsin Shares program does not cover crisis or respite childcare. DCFS has been working with the Office of Child Care in the Department of Workforce Development to identify resources and current policies which impact the provision of child care services for foster parents. Recommendations will be made to improve childcare services for foster families, including possible statutory changes for consideration by the Legislature.

In addition, the DCFS is working with the Division of Health Care Financing to develop a pilot to provide managed health care services to children in out-of-home care in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare system. At this time, interim steps have been established that include temporary Medical Assistance (MA) cards specifically for foster children, a system for child welfare managers to verify MA eligibility through EDS, and a health history report to be included as a part of the Information to Foster Parents form. The Department is examining ways to expand these interim steps statewide.

### *Financial Support*

In his Kids First Agenda for Wisconsin, Governor Jim Doyle plans to work with the legislature to increase the rate paid to foster parents during the upcoming session. The DCFS continues to advocate for increases in the basic foster care rate paid to foster parents to a level equal to the average basic rate for the other states in federal Region V. Increasing the basic rate requires legislative approval and the basic rate was last increased by 1% for calendar year 2001. The DCFS requested rate increases for 2002 through 2005, but rate increases were not included in the state budget bill for legislative consideration. The DCFS will continue to recommend increases in the basic foster care rate, but due to state budget limitations, the basic rate remains at the 2001 reimbursement rate level.

In Wisconsin, special needs of a child may result in additional foster care payments to a foster parent, through the supplemental and exceptional components of the foster care rate structure. The DCFS established a workgroup comprised of child welfare staff, foster parents, and adoption staff to analyze the current need-based payment rates and eligibility criteria in determining supplemental and exceptional payment rates. This group is examining the rate setting structure and procedure, the amount for clothing allowances, the use of debit cards from retailers, the maximum amount a foster family can be reimbursed, and other details related to foster care payments. This workgroup will make recommendations to DCFS for consideration as a policy/budget initiative by the Department. The DCFS is also examining the possibility of additional reimbursement to support the placement of sibling groups in foster homes and the qualifications of foster parents related to training or educational background.

### *Programmatic Supports*

The DCFS has identified several program areas critical to the quality of care that foster parents are able to provide for children temporarily in their care. These programmatic supports include the Wisconsin Foster Care Resource Center, an initiative included in Governor Doyle's KidsFirst agenda, ensuring provision of information critical to the care of children in temporary out-of-home care, participation in and access to competency-based training, and the recruitment and continued availability of qualified licensed foster care providers.

The DCFS has promulgated an administrative rule that describes the information that must be provided by the placing agency to the foster parent or other physical custodian. [Ref. Chapter HFS 37, Adm. Code] This information is critical in order for the foster parents or other physical custodians to appropriately respond to the needs of the child, to assure the safety of and protection for the child, and to protect the foster parent and his or her family and property. The DCFS has also revised the Information for Foster Parents form to assure that critical information regarding the child is provided to the foster parent no later than the time the child is actually placed in the home. Through the development of Quality Assurance reviews, the DCFS will monitor compliance with the requirements of this administrative rule.

### *Foster Parent Training*

In Wisconsin, counties, some tribes, and private child placing agencies license foster homes and these local agencies maintain responsibility for recruiting, training, licensing, and re-licensing foster homes. Wisconsin does not have a mandated training program for foster parents, but many licensing agencies have their own orientation and training requirements. To better support the knowledge and skills needed by foster families and to enhance more successful and more timely child permanency outcomes, and with the Governor's commitment through KidsFirst, the DCFS is promoting the statewide utilization of a competency-based pre-service training system for foster parents.

In 2001, the DCFS funded a pilot training project for competency-based pre-service training for foster parents in four counties and a training program was developed using the Partners in Alternative Care Education, or P.A.C.E., curriculum. In 2002, DCFS made the P.A.C.E. curriculum available statewide and encouraged county agencies to utilize the curriculum or similar competency-based curriculum for their foster parent training activities. The pre-service training program includes local foster parents as co-trainers in delivery of the training. DCFS is currently in the third year of providing fiscal incentives to county child welfare agencies that offer pre-service, competency-based training to foster parents. The inconsistency in foster parent training was a finding in the Wisconsin CFSR and both KidsFirst and the PEP include specific action steps to expand foster parent pre-service and ongoing training.

Currently, the DCFS has received applications from over 25 counties to access Title IV-E funding for competency-based, pre-service training for foster parents. In order for counties to obtain funding, the application must include specific competencies and utilize child welfare staff and foster parents as co-trainers. In addition, the training must be interactive and encourage discussion of issues and skills of both the foster parents and caseworkers. The goal of this proposal is to assure quality, competency-based pre-service training to foster parents and to provide increased funding to counties for training.

In the spring of 2004, the DCFS brought together youth who are currently in or were recently in out-of-home-care and created a Youth Advisory Council for teens and young adults. When it was developed, the aim of the Youth Advisory was to give youth a voice about their experiences in foster care and to provide the DCFS with an opportunity to implement policy changes based upon recommendations from the youth. In addition, the youth developed their own mission to "help other kids in foster care." Through this group, the DCFS will continually evaluate and examine ways to improve the foster care system to better support foster children.

## **Support Practice in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare**

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare was created in 1998 in response to a class action lawsuit that was filed in 1993. At this time the State of Wisconsin assumed direct administrative responsibility for child welfare service delivery in Milwaukee County. Wisconsin is otherwise a state in which counties are directly responsible for the operation of child welfare and protective services. Services in Milwaukee County are delivered through a public/private partnership of state staff and private agencies. State staff assess reports of abuse and neglect, perform child protective service intake and assessment functions, and refer cases for further services. Contracted service providers deliver in-home safety services, ongoing case management, and other child welfare functions.

In December 2002, a settlement agreement was approved by the Federal district court for the ongoing Jeanine B. v. Scott McCallum, et al. case involving the BMCW. The settlement agreement ended several years of litigation in the Jeanine B. case over compliance with federal Title IV-E requirements and established a number of program improvement goals for the BMCW. The settlement agreement includes monitoring performance over a 3-year period (Calendar Years 2003 - 2005) with improvement targets for each of the three years. The performance standards and monitoring items are in the areas of Safety, Permanency and Well Being.

The following data present the performance of BMCW during Period 1 (January 1, 2003 – December 31, 2003) of the Settlement Agreement, and year-to-date performance data for Period 2. The data is presented in three distinct categories: targets the BMCW met or exceeded for Period 1, targets not met for Period 1; and items reported for monitoring purposes only. Following these descriptions is a table that shows actual year-end Period 1 performance for each category.

### ***Category 1 - Settlement sections where the BMCW met or exceeded Period 1 targets:***

#### **PERMANENCY**

- ❑ The Settlement identifies two specific areas in relation to the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) regarding termination of parental rights or exception reasons: (1) At least 65% of children reaching their 15<sup>th</sup> of the most recent 22 months in out-of-home care (OHC) shall have a TPR petition filed on their behalf or an available ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> month in care, and (2) At least 75% of children in care for more than 15 of the most recent 22 months for whom BMCW was not in compliance with ASFA as of the start of the review period shall have a TPR petition filed on their behalf or an available ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the period. BMCW met both of the ASFA compliance standards for Period 1 with 76.8% for item 1 and 88.5% for item 2.

## SAFETY

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the percentage of children in BMCW custody who are victims of substantiated abuse or neglect by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed, establishing a threshold of .70% for Period 1. BMCW is under the threshold limit with .57%.
- ❑ The Settlement requires that (1) CPS reports must be referred for investigation to the Independent Investigation Agency within 3 business days, and (2) Independent Investigations at the agency need to be assigned to an Investigator within 3 days of referral, and (3) all independent investigations need to be completed and have a determination within 60 days of referral. In all three areas, the BMCW exceeded the Period 1 expectation with 99.8% for item 1, 99.6% for item 2, and 97.6% for item 3.

## WELL-BEING

- ❑ The Settlement tracks the average number of family cases per case manager. Currently, the BMCW is in compliance with the Period 1 expectation with approximately 10 families assigned to each Ongoing Case Manager with a performance standard of less than 13 families per case manager.
- ❑ The Settlement also requires that the Ongoing Case Managers have direct monthly face-to-face contact with a minimum of 90% of the children (children in Milwaukee and contiguous counties). The BMCW met this standard for Period 1 with 90%.

### ***Category 2 - Settlement sections where the BMCW did not meet Period 1 targets:***

Note: The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare has implemented a corrective action plan to address the three Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during period 1. The corrective action plan is attached.

## PERMANENCY

- ❑ The Settlement requires that the BMCW assess the length of stay of children in OHC placements greater than 24 month (measured against baseline of 5,533). The Settlement requires no more than 40% in care greater than 24 months, and the BMCW did not meet this performance expectation with 44.2%.
- ❑ The Settlement requires that 20% of adoptions finalized occur within 24 months of the child's removal from home and entry into OHC. The BMCW's performance did not meet the expectation, but showed improvement over the year with 14.2%.

## WELL BEING

- ❑ Placement Stability – At least 80% percent of children in out-of-home care within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current placement episode. The number of placements will exclude time-

limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-care episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation. The BMCW achieved 75.9%, so did not meet this performance standard.

- ❑ The Settlement also requires the BMCW to determine the number of children who have been reunified within 12 months of entry into OHC. During Period 1, this item is monitored only and there was no performance standard. Forty-five percent of the 864 children reunified in period 1 were reunified within 12 months or less.

### ***Category 3 - Settlement sections for monitoring purposes:***

The outcomes in the final section of the summary do not have an identified performance expectation standard indicated in the settlement, but the BMCW goal is to achieve 100%.

#### **PERMANENCY**

- ❑ The settlement tracks to ensure that all children's (1) initial permanency plans are completed within 60 days of entry into OHC and (2) that all children have a current Judicial Permanency Plan Review or Permanency Plan Review. The BMCW achieved 97% for item 1 and 88.7% for item 2.
- ❑ The BMCW is also required to monitor "re-entry" of children previously in OHC within 12 months of exiting OHC. Of the 1,109 children who entered OHC between January and December 2003, 79 of the 111 children who re-entered care, or 71%, re-entered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode.

#### **WELL BEING**

- ❑ The BMCW also tracks (1) the timeframe for completion of family assessments (must be completed within 90 days), and (2) the distribution of Placement Packet information to Foster Parents. The BMCW exceeded 90% for both categories.
- ❑ The average number of children per Ongoing Case Manager is also monitored, but there is no standard. Although this is by Ongoing Site, the estimated BMCW average is 19.5 children per Case Manager.
- ❑ Also monitored are (1) children's Initial Health Checks (CPC) within 5 business days of first placement as recorded in WiSACWIS, and (2) children with an up-to-date physical and dental exam recorded in WiSACWIS. Estimated YTD performance for CPC health checks and annual medical and dental exams was under 85%.
- ❑ Turnover - Overall, the BMCW experienced a turnover rate of Ongoing Case Manager staff in excess of 30% in Period 1 (CY 2003). Continued efforts to



further explore the turnover issue and how to address improving staff retention remain in the forefront of issues the BMCW is working on during CY 2004. It is an important area of focus in the Governor's KidsFirst agenda.

The following table provides actual performance data for Period 1 (CY 2003), what the standard was for Period 1, and what the standard changes to in Period 2.

**Settlement Performance for Period 1 and Settlement Standards for Periods 1 & 2**

<b>Settlement Section</b>	<b>Performance Achieved during Period 1 CY 2003</b>	<b>Period 1 Performance Standard CY 2003</b>	<b>Period 2 Performance Standard CY 2004</b>
<b>I.B.2 - ASFA</b>	76.8%	65%	75%
<b>I.B.3 - ASFA</b>	88.5%	75%	85%
<b>I.B.4 - LOS</b>	44.2%	40%	35%
<b>I.B.6 - Reunification</b>	45%	Monitor Only	65%
<b>I.B.7 - Adoptions</b>	14.2%	20%	25%

<b>I.C.1 - Maltreatment</b>	0.57%	0.70%	0.60%
<b>I.C.2 - Intake</b>	99.8%	80%	85%
<b>I.C.3 - Independent Investigations</b>	99.6%	80%	85%
<b>I.C.4 - Independent Investigation Determinations</b>	97.6%	80%	85%
<b>I.D.2 - Caseload Size</b>	9.6	Less than 13 families per OCM	Less than 11 families per OCM
<b>I.D.4 - Face to Face</b>	90%	90%	90%
<b>I.D.7 - Assessment Centers, Stabilization Centers</b>	Successfully Implemented	Implement	Monitor
<b>I.D.8 - Foster Parent Reimbursement Rates</b>	BMCW requested a rate increase		
<b>I.D.9 - Placement Stability</b>	75.9%	80%	82%
<b>II. Named Plaintiffs</b>		Monitor	Monitor
<b>III.C.1-Family Assessments</b>	96.4%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.2 - Initial Health Screen</b>	58.2%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only

<b>III.C.3 - Placement Packets</b>	91.0%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.4 - Annual Physical</b>	75.4%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.4 - Annual Dental</b>	57.4%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.5 - Initial Permanency Plans</b>	97.0%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.6 - APPR &amp; PPR</b>	88.7%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.7 - Re-Entry</b>	71%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.8 - Turnover</b>	30.1%	Monitor Only	Monitor Only
<b>III.C.9 - Children per Caseload</b>	19.5	Monitor Only	Monitor Only

The Bureau is placing great emphasis on a family-centered approach to case planning and case management and has adopted the Coordinated Services Team model to support these goals and values. The *BMCW Standards of Practice* continue to be updated to support the consistency, quality, and timeliness of child protective services and out-of-home care. The *Standards* include assessment of and response to ensure child safety and the development and implementation of service plans to support family change.

Staff training continues to be a major emphasis of the BMCW to improve the quality of services. All new staff receive extensive training on the *BMCW Standards* prior to taking on cases. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the BMCW established a child welfare training partnership in 2001 that offers courses to improve the core competencies of caseworkers. The core courses were offered beginning in July 2002. In cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the BMCW implemented a competency-based supervisory training program based on the supervisory curricula produced by the CWLA. State and vendor agency supervisors and key management staff continue to participate together in this specialized training program designed to support supervisory competencies, leadership skills, and organizational performance.

The BMCW continues to emphasize desired program outcomes within the Milwaukee child welfare program through the use of performance-based contracts. Performance outcomes consistent with the federal performance indicators are incorporated into service contracts with service agencies. Contractor performance is monitored through comprehensive case and program reviews by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers.

## **Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services**

Title IV-B Subpart I is a federal block grant that can be used for a broad range of child welfare services. In Wisconsin, Subpart I funds are used for the Community Aids, the Youth Aids, and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs. A small amount of Subpart I funds are also used for DCFS child welfare operations.

Community Aids The Community Aids program is the state mechanism to provide county human and social service agencies in Wisconsin with funds for a variety of human services. Subpart I funds are included in Community Aids to give county agencies resources to provide child welfare services. Other funds that are part of Community Aids used for child welfare services include Social Services Block Grant funds, Title IV-E revenue earned based on expenses incurred by the state, counties, and tribes, and state tax dollars. The Community Aids funds are used by county agencies for child welfare services and other services to children and families. Counties are required to provide a local match to Community Aids, with most counties providing more than the minimum amount of match. The county match is the primary source of state match for the Subpart I funds.

*Progress report:* Since the IV-B Subpart I funds are part of the larger Community Aids program, it is not possible to attribute specific program results to the IV-B funds. The Community Aids program was continued in 2003 with no major changes.

Youth Aids – The Youth Aids program is the state mechanism to provide county human and social service agencies in Wisconsin with funds for community-based juvenile justice services. Subpart I funds are included in Youth Aids to give county agencies resources to provide child welfare services to the juvenile population, including community services to prevent placement, placement services, and post-placement aftercare services.

*Progress report:* Since the IV-B Subpart I funds are part of the larger Youth Aids program, it is not possible to attribute specific program results to the IV-B funds. The Youth Aids program was continued in 2003 with no major changes.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Program - Subpart I funds are used, along with other state, local, and federal funds, to support the Runaway Services Program. The goals of the Runaway Services Program are to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent, stable homes for youth. Services provided as part of the Runaway Program include a 24-hour crisis intervention hotline and safe shelter, counseling for youth and families, and education, prevention, outreach, and aftercare services to youth and their families.

*Progress Report:* During the 2000-2004 period, Wisconsin runaway programs served over 12,547 youth face-to-face, provide over 8,432 families with counseling, provide temporary shelter for approximately 6,600 youth and receive 75,077 telephone contacts from troubled youth. Of the youth personally counseled, at least 96% were either reunited with their family or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

## **IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

### *Introduction*

The Wisconsin Program for Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) is administered by the BPP and has four components: family preservation, family support, time-limited-reunification services, and adoption promotion and support. The first three are delivered or arranged for by county and tribal agencies. Adoption promotion and support services are provided at the state level through the BPP Adoption Program, and a small portion of the grant is used to fund three statewide grants.

Subpart II funds are allocated to counties and tribes to operate local PSSF programs with preservation, support, and reunification programs. These local PSSF programs operate throughout the state in a decentralized manner. In several counties, the PSSF program is incorporated into the Brighter Futures Initiative (BFI), which focuses on improving outcomes for children and families through prevention efforts involving funds from several sources. Building on local collaboration and community-wide planning efforts, PSSF program service delivery involves various stakeholders within each of the counties and tribes within the state.

While local operation of the PSSF program is a cornerstone of its unique implementation in Wisconsin, each local agency under contract with the state is responsible for meeting the following requirements:

- Provision of family preservation, family support, and time-limited reunification services designed to promote child and family well being. To meet the IV-B Subpart II fiscal requirements for preservation, support, and reunification services, local agencies are required to dedicate the required portion of their total PSSF program funds to each of the three service areas.
- In calendar year 2003, over 39,000 children and 35,000 families received PSSF preservation, support, or reunification services from county agencies. (Note: These numbers do not include the families and children served by tribal PSSF programs or with PSSF funds in BFI counties.)
- Development of implementation plans that include measurable outcomes and that meet the funding allocations as defined by the federal requirements.
- Comprehensive, active involvement of multiple stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Submitting an annual plan report that includes levels of achievement in meeting their identified outcome measures and an expenditure report showing actual expenditures in support, preservation, and reunification.

The adoption component of PSSF is delivered by the state Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) and PSSF funds are combined with other state and federal dollars to locate a family to provide a safe, permanent home for children who cannot achieve permanence with their biological parents. The progress report and plan for the adoption component of PSSF can be found in the adoption section of this plan.

### *PSSF Program Progress Report*

The purpose and function of PSSF has expanded since its inception. The initial program, Family Preservation and Support, focused on preservation and support and creating stronger links between the community and the child welfare service delivery system. Subsequently, with the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, the program was expanded and renamed the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Time-limited reunification and adoption promotion and support were added as required elements.

The focus of the Wisconsin PSSF program has been to ensure that PSSF services improve outcomes for children and families served by the child welfare system in Wisconsin. As new child welfare policies, standards, and procedures are developed and implemented statewide with the goal of improving safety, permanence, and the well being of children and families, PSSF service providers are expected to coordinate services and target populations in ways that improve child welfare program outcomes.

- Particular attention has been paid to the time-limited reunification and adoption elements of PSSF. Based on the results of the outcome measures, counties have not only succeeded in achieving reunification goals for children and families served with PSSF funding, but have also achieved a higher level of permanence by reducing re-entry into out-of-home care. The number of adoptions in Wisconsin has steadily increased. (Information about those results can be found in the adoption section of the plan.)
- DCFS has held regional meetings with counties to discuss a refined format for their three-year plans that will include federal outcomes with a focus on ease of use. Counties will also be required to address needed enhancements of their local child welfare programs as identified in the Wisconsin PEP.
- Wisconsin has received increases in PSSF funding for FFY 2003 and FFY 2004 and DCFS is distributing the majority of those additional funds to counties for local PSSF program services. Counties will be expected to use this funding to address areas of need identified in the PEP, as appropriate.
- In the PSSF Plan for 2004, DCFS identified the need to review the funding to counties. When the current distributions were derived, they were based on local plan requests. In some instances, there was a significant variance in these requests. Subsequently, many of the counties that requested smaller amounts have asked for funding at the same level as some of their peer counties. Until

FFY 2004, DCFS has not had sufficient additional funding to adjust county allocations. The increase in the IV-B Subpart II federal grant has allowed DCFS to adjust county allocations and provide greater equity in the county allocations. For CY 2005, the minimum allocation will be \$35,000 per county.

- Wisconsin continues to work with counties and tribes to strengthen collaborative efforts and leverage additional dollars at the local level. Counties are encouraged to write joint PSSF/IV-E Incentive program plans. The IV-E Incentive program allocates discretionary IV-E revenue claimed by the state to county child welfare agencies to provide prevention and intervention programming for children, youth, and families.
- PSSF has partnered with other DHFS programs to provide funding for a newly implemented program, the Coordinated Services Team Initiative (CST). The CST approach promotes a system change in the way services are delivered to children and families involved in the child welfare, mental health, and substance abuse systems. Funding, training, and technical assistance are provided to counties to maximize the use of existing resources that support collaborative efforts resulting in a clear vision, meaningful structural change, and measurable outcomes for children and their families across systems.
- The 2001 PSSF program amendments allow states to support infant safe haven programs under the family preservation services portion of the PSSF program.
- An infant relinquishment law was enacted in Wisconsin in 2001 and PSSF program operators have been advised they can use PSSF funds to support safe haven programs.
- The 2001 PSSF program amendments also allow states to provide services to strengthen parental relationships and promote healthy marriages under the family support services portion of the PSSF program. PSSF program operators have been advised they can use PSSF funds for services to strengthen families. The DCFS also works collaboratively with the Department of Workforce Development regarding the use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for strengthening families and promoting responsible fatherhood.
- Outcome training has been provided to local programs and counties have become much more proficient in utilizing a results-based approach in developing local plans and identifying “what works.” They have become much more skilled at identifying what programs achieve the best results for the children and families they serve.

County agencies are expected to create program goals and accomplish identified outcomes. The agencies are also required to develop and implement an evaluation component. Among the required outcomes is that an agency will be able to document reduction in the:

- rate of recurrence of child maltreatment
- number of children re-entering out-of-home care
- length of time children spend in out-of-home care per episode

#### **IV-B Program - Current Federal Initiatives**

Under the Title IV-B Subpart I and II programs, most of the funds are allocated to county and tribal agencies for services at the local level. Local agencies are given broad discretion with Subpart I funds allocated as part of the Community Aids program and within required service categories for the Subpart II funds, which are a separate PSSF program allocation. Local agencies assess their needs and may use their combined IV-B funds to meet local service priorities.

Under the Subpart II PSSF program, county agencies are required to have local planning committees. Local committees are broad-based and include a wide array of community representatives, including law enforcement, schools, the faith community, private provider agencies, local social services, and many others. Planning for Subpart II funds allocated to tribes is part of consolidated human service program workplans developed by tribes with input from their tribal communities. Both counties and tribes supplement the IV-B funds received from the state with other state and local funds to support their overall service delivery system for children and families.

The Administration for Children and Families has identified a number of national Executive Initiatives for which states may use IV-B funds. Since Wisconsin allocates funds to local agencies and allows local agencies to develop program plans based on their unique local needs and resources, DCFS does not have statewide programs funded with IV-B monies specifically to address these federal initiatives. However, many of the local plans include elements of these federal initiatives.

##### *a. Healthy Marriage*

Many local programs use the support portion of their PFFS grants to fund parenting programs at local family resources centers, home visitor programs, and other parenting initiatives. In addition, both preservation and reunification programs fund family counseling that focuses on strengthening relationships, including parental relationships.

At this time, DCFS is also considering proposals from organizations in Milwaukee County and other interested parties to provide specific funding toward this initiative.

#### *b. Responsible Fatherhood*

Our former governor sponsored a statewide summit on fatherhood. PSSF service providers and other human services program staff were actively involved in that summit. As a result, many local agencies have adopted Fatherhood Programs or made existing programs more “father friendly.” The State has used PSSF dollars to fund the development and piloting of a “father friendly” assessment tool. In addition, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare continues to work to strengthen efforts to identify fathers and connect children and fathers. The BPP is allocating PSSF monies to expand fatherhood activities: 1) to enhance efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the CPS system; and, 2) to develop protocols that provide technical assistance and service assessments to counties/agencies that assist in removing barriers to create father friendly programs and services.

#### *c. Youth Development*

In Wisconsin, the PSSF funding for county programs is supplemented with Drug Free Schools money. Local programs use both sources of funding to provide after-school programming, mentoring programs, grants to local schools and community groups for youth programs, and a variety of youth prevention/intervention initiatives. Several counties are participating in the Brighter Futures Initiative, which focuses on positive youth development and coordination or prevention services funded from multiple sources, including PSSF.

#### *d. Faith Based and Community Initiatives*

The DCFS actively seeks the participation of the faith community in child welfare program services. Several of the county planning committees include members of the faith community and funding at the local level may go to faith-based programs. In addition, the DCFS has a collaborative faith-based committee that assists us in a number of areas. For example, we have worked with faith-based groups to promote Wisconsin’s Week of the Family.

#### *e. Rural Initiative*

Wisconsin’s PSSF program has been designed to allow communities to develop plans and implement programs that meet the unique needs of their individual communities. Consequently, rural programs are able to address special concerns such as transportation, isolation, limited service providers, etc. Funding is provided directly to the counties, allowing rural areas the ability to determine how to best serve their population and who will provide the services.

Funding allocations for PSSF and other programs recognize the challenges of providing services in rural areas, so small counties are given minimum base allocations to ensure they can provide a minimum level of service.



*f. Coordinated Service Teams*

The Coordinated Service Team (CST) Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Division of Disability and Elder Services (DDES) in the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS). The CST approach promotes a deeper and more active role for families in identifying their strengths, needs and the case plan that helps them achieve either reunification with or permanence for their children. CST's are especially key in ensuring that families with mental health and substance abuse issues receive appropriate and effective services that are family-friendly and with which they can succeed. Time-limited financial support, training, and technical assistance are provided to counties to maximize the use of existing resources that support collaborative efforts resulting in a clear vision, meaningful structural change, and measurable outcomes for children and families across systems.

## **Adoption Program**

### *Program Description*

The Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP) provides permanency consultation to child welfare agencies, recruits adoptive families, and finalizes adoption for children who need a permanent home. Children in out-of-home care who are made available for adoption by counties through a termination of parental rights (TPR) are referred to the SNAP.

Children are matched with adoptive parents or, in the majority of cases, are adopted by their foster parents. DCFS oversees the program statewide, with the Milwaukee adoption program managed by BMCW and the balance-of-state program managed by BPP.

In July 2000, DHFS entered into contracts with private child placing agencies across the state to increase program capacity to move children to permanence in a quality and timely manner. Federal mandates regarding permanence for children require that states look at ways to increase their capacities to serve children needing adoptive families while maintaining acceptable adoption caseworker workloads.

### *Progress Report*

Beginning in 2000, DCFS has implemented a comprehensive adoption initiative to increase the number of adoptions and implement standards of practice for adoption cases. The adoption program uses innovative approaches to providing professional quality services that have resulted in permanency for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition, surveys reflect that adoptive families have a high level of satisfaction with the services provided through the program. Planning and consultation by state adoption staff with counties has assisted in moving more children to reunification or permanence through adoption. At the same time, applicants for an adoptive placement are discovering that the time to complete an adoptive home study has decreased from previous years. All of these approaches will continue to have an impact on meeting federal benchmarks for outcomes for child welfare intervention.

DHFS and private partner adoption staff strive to find appropriate adoptive families to best meet the needs of children when it is not safe for them to stay with their birth parents. A majority of the children adopted through the SNAP are eligible for adoption assistance. Adoption assistance reimburses the family for some of the costs of extensive and frequently expensive care. As of February 2003, there were 6,954 children receiving Adoption Assistance through the State of Wisconsin. The Adoption Assistance Program is funded with Title IV-E and state matching funds. Adoption assistance may include:

- medical assistance for some medical costs not covered by the family's health insurance;
- a monthly reimbursement to adoptive parent(s) to assist in meeting the financial demands of caring for a child with special needs; and
- reimbursement of certain non-recurring adoption expenses (e.g., legal fees and/or agency fees) up to \$2,000 per child.

Chapter HFS 50, Adm. Code, *Facilitating the Adoption of a Child with Special Needs*, became effective in 2002. According to its requirements, a child must have, or be at high risk of developing, special care needs in order to be eligible for adoption assistance, and otherwise would not be able to be placed for adoption without assistance. Examples of a child with special care needs include:

- an older child – 10 to 18 years of age;
- a child experiencing emotional or behavioral problems to a degree that meets established criteria;
- a sibling group of three or more that must be placed together;
- a child of a minority race who cannot be readily placed due to a lack of placement resources, in accordance with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA);
- a child with a disability or in need of personal care assistance (e.g., dressing, bathing, or feeding) or with special medical or physical problems that require special diets, medication, or physical therapy; and
- a child at risk of developing special care needs due to poor prenatal care, or a child whose birth family medical history indicates a risk for future health problems, or a child whose social history identifies certain risk factors.

The SNAP has grown considerably since July 2000 and has been able to attain permanency for many children in need of adoptive homes. The number of adoptions has increased steadily, as shown in the table below, both in Milwaukee and the balance of state. In 2002, the number of adoptions exceeded 1,000 for the first time ever in Wisconsin.

In 2003, both the Milwaukee and balance-of-state programs were able to maintain the momentum of the previous year and achieve increased numbers of adoptions. The State Adoption Program increased the number of adoptions from 544 in 2002 to 562 in 2003. The Milwaukee program increased adoptions from 500 in 2002 to 591 in 2003, an increase of 18% over the previous year. The overall total for the two programs for 2003 was 1,153 children reaching permanency through adoption, a 10% increase over 2002.

The following chart reflects the trend of adoptions for special needs children in which DHFS had guardianship.

<b>Adoption Finalizations</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Balance-of-state</b>	<b>BMCW</b>	<b>Total</b>
1995	313	151	464
1996	311	254	565
1997	321	290	611
1998	415	307	722
1999	350	304	654
2000	421	288	709
2001	464	263	727
2002	544	500	1044
2003	562	591	1153

The goal of permanency is a common thread that unites agencies to achieve the established standards of practice of the Adoption Program. The SNAP has evolved into a program that ensures quality services to families and timely permanence to children by adhering to performance standards that focus on best practice and comply with state and federal guidelines.

### ***Redesign of State Adoption Program***

In July 2000, DCFS entered into a formal partnership with Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Bethany Christian Services, and the Professional Association of Treatment Foster Homes (PATH). The partnership initiative complements the state Adoption Program by increasing the capacity to serve the number of children referred for adoptive placement. It also paved the way for the redesign of the SNAP in 2003, which further shifted a number of additional responsibilities to private partner agencies.

In March 2003, a reorganization of the State Adoption Program was implemented by BPP to provide special needs adoption services through three regions, rather than five, and to fully implement the roles of the state social workers to that of "State Permanency Consultants." The restructuring required the closing of two regional offices (Waukesha and Rhinelander), with services provided through three expanded regions based in Eau Claire, Madison, and Green Bay. This reduced the number of FTE state positions by 14.5 and resulted in private agency caseworkers now being assigned all adoption cases, no matter the level of complexity. In addition, private agency caseworkers are taking over the responsibility for assessment of new adoptive family applicants to the program, a duty that previously rested with state social workers. The state program will complete the staff reductions by June 30, 2004 without any layoffs of staff through the process of retirements and the transition of social workers to other positions in state service.

The remaining 16 FTE for state staff are comprised of three regional supervisors and 13 social workers. The 13 social workers are moving into roles working with the counties as "State Permanency Consultants," while three supervisors oversee the work of the SNAP in the three regions. Private agency caseworkers have been added to provide case management and adoption services to children and families. With the change in their caseloads, state adoption staff are able to be utilized as consultants to counties for work on specific cases and on system and best practice models designed to achieve safe, permanent, and stable homes for children in out-of-home care.

The transition to the redesigned Adoption Program is not yet complete, as state staff are currently working to finalize their adoption cases and to increase their consultation responsibilities in their assigned counties. The specialized expertise of the state adoption staff is expected to generate improved outcomes for children, in the ability to ensure earlier intervention in permanency decisions, and to assist in obtaining the effective services for children in transition. The Adoption Program began functioning in the three expanded regions on January 1, 2004.

### *Use of Adoption Incentive Payments*

The DCFS has initiated and continues to implement efforts to support the delivery of timely, high-quality special needs adoption services. Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS have been directed toward the continued support of the Special Needs Adoption Initiative and other child welfare program services. Such resources are used to enhance the program's capacity to complete adoptive home studies, finalize adoptive placements, and achieve adoptions in a more timely manner. Adoption incentive funds enhance the State's capacity to recruit and study potential adoptive families and finalize adoptive placements by public and private staff within the Adoption Program.

Adoption incentive funds received by the DCFS were used to support Adoption Program services in the following areas:

- Increased adoptive home studies for families by contract partner agencies;
- Support the Post-Adoption Resource Centers to provide post-adoption services;
- Support recruitment efforts to find adoptive resources for children; and,
- Fund project staff to perform additional special needs adoption services.

Adoption incentive funds have been used to support the state Adoption Program private partner contracts for all years except year 4 of the report period. In year four, \$1million was included in the BMCW program budget for network services to support permanency for children. The remaining \$158,000 was used to support the state adoption contracts.

The first year of the next five-year plan is the first time where the funds have not been included in the approved budget. Because of this, DCFS will have some flexibility in how it spend the funds received as a result of our FFY 2003 adoption performance.

Per the requirement in Section 473A of the Social Security Act for adoption incentive funds, Wisconsin provides health insurance coverage through the Title XIX Medical Assistance Program to all children with special needs for whom there is an Adoption Assistance Agreement in place. The Medical Assistance Program offers broad access to a comprehensive range of medical services. Medical Assistance categorically needy coverage is authorized for every child who is qualified for Adoption Assistance whether they are Title IV-E eligible or not. Children who receive no Adoption Assistance funds but who are considered "at risk" are also certified for Medical Assistance coverage.

### *International Adoptions*

As a result of the Hague Convention, states are required to track dissolutions of adoptions of international children. Dissolutions of adoptions occur after the adoption has been finalized as compared with disruptions of pre-adoptive placements prior to finalization. For purposes of tracking dissolutions, DCFS looks for information on dissolutions of international adoptions where the child enters out-of-home care or parental rights of the adoptive parents are terminated.

In 2003, DCFS recorded 15 internationally adopted children who entered out-of-home care. Eight cases ended up with a termination of parental rights (TPR) and subsequent adoption by another family. In the other cases, the original adoptive families are caring for the child with the help of services provided through the county.

DCFS does not have any way to identify dissolutions of international adoptions that do not come to the attention of county child welfare agencies. DCFS receives anecdotal information about families that arrange independent adoptions for these children, but unless the family comes forward to ask for services or financial support, DCFS has no way of knowing the number of such cases.

DCFS currently does not have the specific details on the 15 cases in 2003 in terms of the country of origin for the children or the agencies that arranged the adoptions. Future reports will provide this level of detail.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)**

The most significant change in Wisconsin's child protective services system over the past five years has been the gradual move from 72 local CPS programs, each operating according to its own interpretation of state standards and policies and local community expectations, to a statewide program where all 72 local agencies use the same model of practice, the Wisconsin Model. The development of the statewide automated system (WiSACWIS) accelerated a move toward consistency of practice that had been slowly occurring through development of standards, training, the development of risk assessment and safety assessment tools, and technical assistance to counties who chose to implement the forerunner of the Wisconsin Model (WisRMS). By June 30, 2004, all 71 Wisconsin counties and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) will be on WiSACWIS.

The DCFS position funded by CAPTA, a CPS specialist, has been very involved in many aspects of bringing about this consistency. These include policy and standard development, refinement of tools, development of the ongoing services portion of the Wisconsin Model (family assessment, case plan, and case progress evaluation), curriculum development and training, technical assistance to counties, and technical assistance to the WiSACWIS Project on automating the Wisconsin Model.

Although all counties are now using the same model-- and many of the efforts over the past five years have concentrated on developing policies and standards, developing the model, and increasing knowledge and skills of CPS staff to move toward this level of consistency-- there is still a need to bring greater clarity and specificity to policies, to review and revise the model to reflect new knowledge, and to increase the skills of caseworkers and supervisors to assure greater quality and consistency in decision making. These needs are reflected in the CAPTA Plan for 2004-2009.

Over the past five years, there have been several areas of concentration for program improvement. The areas are:

- A. Safety assessment and planning
- B. Family assessment and case planning
- C. CPS/law enforcement coordination
- D. CPS/DV project
- E. Training for guardians ad litem
- F. Child abuse and neglect prevention
- G. Improving the leadership skills of public child welfare managers
- H. Training for CPS caseworkers and CPS supervisors
- I. Coordinated/integrated service teams in CPS cases
- J. Purpose of the substantiation decision
- K. Citizen Review Panels

### **A. Safety Assessment and Planning**

The *Child Protective Services Investigation Standards* were revised in 1999 and re-issued in January of 2000. The standards included comprehensive instructions and criteria for

safety assessment and safety planning. In 2001, safety protocols and requirements were integrated into the draft of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. All of the safety requirements were incorporated into WiSACWIS, the state's automated child welfare system.

Plans to develop safety protocols for assessing the safety of children being placed in out-of-home care, either in licensed facilities or with relatives, were not completed. Although a brief and useful assessment tool was developed and implemented in WiSACWIS, it is not as comprehensive as DCFS believes is necessary to assure safety. The development of a comprehensive and sufficient safety assessment protocol is a planned activity in Wisconsin's PEP.

#### B. Family Assessment and Case Planning

DCFS began piloting a focused action-oriented approach to family assessment and case planning in 1999. Curricula supporting this approach were also developed and training delivered. However, a change was made in 2000. A county workgroup was established to develop a family assessment format that also provided a consistent way to measure change related to safety and risk of maltreatment that can be applied during the case progress evaluation.

The workgroup also developed a case plan format and case progress evaluation format. Their work was completed between September of 2000 and June of 2001. These became parts of the Wisconsin Model, along with the family assessment, and were automated in WiSACWIS. Training was also developed and delivered to all counties prior to their implementation of WiSACWIS. Throughout this period, the core training course for family assessment and case planning offered by the CW Training Partnerships was modified to reflect the practice and principles in the Wisconsin Model. This is discussed more completely in the section titled Training for CPS Caseworkers and Supervisors.

Because of timeframes driven by WiSACWIS implementation, DCFS needed to implement the ongoing services portion of the Wisconsin Model before it was piloted. In 2003, informal discussions began regarding how the family assessment, in particular, might need to be modified. Opinions expressed included concerns that it might be too unwieldy and broad and not assist in truly focusing on those behaviors and conditions that place children in danger or, conversely, create safe environments. Counties that have Coordinated Service Teams (CST) also raised questions about how the family assessment in the Wisconsin Model fit with the CST assessment and case plan. Several counties implementing both the Wisconsin Model and CST agreed to review the "fit" and make recommendations. In so doing, they also agreed to review whether the family assessment needed to be modified to be more focused and less cumbersome. DCFS will use that information when it formally reviews and revises, if needed, portions of the ongoing services part of the Wisconsin Model.



### C. CPS/Law Enforcement Coordination

Efforts to improve coordination between CPS and law enforcement began in 1999. The *CPS Investigation Standards* were revised to emphasize the need for written agreements between CPS and law enforcement. In 2002, a comprehensive *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies* was developed, using input from a workgroup comprised of both CPS and law enforcement personnel. It was issued in 2003. The *Standard* requires that a memorandum of understanding (MOU) be developed and maintained between the CPS and law enforcement agencies. The MOU must address referrals and communication between agencies, joint interviewing practices, and roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Most recently, law enforcement personnel were included in training on family rights as it relates to CPS practice, as well as a discussion about the implications for change in CPS practice recommendations for policy development. Law enforcement staff were included because changes in CPS practice will impact the collaborative procedures of CPS and law enforcement agencies in many counties. A law enforcement training coordinator from the Department of Justice also participated, with the idea that materials from the training on rights of those families involved with CPS will be incorporated into training for law enforcement staff.

### D. CPS/DV Project

In October of 2000, the DCFS initiated the Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Collaboration Project. This project brought together a workgroup of practitioners in the domestic violence and child welfare fields to begin a dialogue on effective collaboration. The two primary goals for the project were: 1) to establish principles for domestic violence and child protective services (CPS) intervention that can guide practice for each system individually and serve as the focus for collaboration; and 2) advise the DCFS as to how it can provide leadership for collaborative efforts and good practice in both fields by integrating and promoting these principles.

On January 31, 2001, *Mutual Respect and Common Understandings*, the report of the Domestic Violence-Child Welfare Collaboration Workgroup, was released. The report contained principles and recommendations that can be used as a tool to develop local policies and practice aimed at keeping families safe and stable.

The workgroup established eight philosophical principles that support best practice between the two systems. The principles focus on safety for the child and non-abusing family member together, accountability for batterers, protecting the confidentiality of victims of domestic abuse to the extent possible, and the need to provide a range of responses appropriate to each family's circumstances.

Since the release of the report, the DCFS has carried out activities to help remove barriers and promote collaboration between CPS and DV programs. These activities include:

- Training for each system on the roles, values, policies, needs, and limitations of the counterpart system;
- Regular opportunities for professionals in both systems to meet on a regional basis to discuss areas of mutual concern;
- Technical assistance to foster collaboration on the community level;
- Development of model interagency protocols for local collaboration and service delivery; and
- Development and improvement of state-level policy for better response to families experiencing domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Additionally, training has been provided to judges and court commissioners on the impact of domestic violence on children and identified appropriate interventions.

In 2003, to continue with efforts and provide more specific assistance in the area of collaboration, intensive, site-specific, technical assistance was provided to Harbor House Domestic Abuse Program and the Outagamie County Department of Human Services to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to serve as a model for other programs in the state. The model MOU is being shared statewide.

A series of meetings to promote collaboration between Domestic Violence Programs and Child Protective Services agencies was held in three regions of the state. The first meeting helped programs to get to know their counterpart system and to identify issues of concern. The second meeting provided training and technical assistance on the development of inter-agency agreements.

Two training sessions on “Child Protective Services: Learning the Basics” for domestic violence agency staff were held in May and June.

A workshop on DV-CPS Collaboration with a panel of DV and CPS participants from three different counties was offered at the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference in April, 2003.

A workshop on “The Batterer as Parent” was offered at the annual “Through the Eyes of a Child” conference (for child welfare professionals and guardians ad litem) in November 2003.

Consultation and technical assistance on working with counterpart systems on various issues was provided to specific agencies on request.

#### E. Training for Guardians ad Litem

In November of 1999, the Division co-sponsored the “first annual” conference for guardians ad litem (GALs). The conference was coordinated and co-sponsored by the Division and representatives from the University of Wisconsin, Department of Justice, Director of State Courts, Wisconsin State Bar, and the Wisconsin Professional Society on the Abuse of Children. This conference introduced and highlighted the importance of

cross system understanding and service coordination. Since this time, this conference has become a yearly offering.

The GAL Conference is aimed at professionals whose work impacts the well being of children. Promoting a multi-disciplinary approach to child advocacy, the conference brings together social workers, guardians ad litem, judges, court commissioners, prosecutors, public defenders, therapists, and other professionals. This conference provides for an array of professionals to come together to learn from a variety of experts in the fields of family dynamics, law, child development, child psychology, medicine, and child welfare. The conference focuses on how professionals can work together to ensure that children's needs are met in the context of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. The goal is to provide information and skills to assist professionals in making the best recommendations and decisions possible for children.

Topics pertinent to child safety have always been covered at this conference. Focus has been given to ensure that information provided is applicable to social workers, GALs, and other community partners. Themes and topic areas have been covered over several years, with different focus and depth being provided.

Examples of past conference themes or topics includes:

- Child Protective Services Safety Assessment and Planning.
- Domestic Violence and Child Maltreatment
- Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Child Maltreatment Investigation
- Permanency Planning and Concurrent Permanency Planning
- Family Group Decision Making
- Children and Family Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues and Treatment
- The Adoption and Safe Families Act as well as Chapter 48 Case Law and Legislative Updates
- Juvenile Court Procedural Innovations and Issues
- Fatherhood Initiatives
- Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Issues
- Independent Living
- Legal and Practical Issues of Grandparents (and Other relatives) Raising Children
- Indian Child Welfare
- Poverty
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

The Guardian ad Litem conference has been a significant source of training and continues to be well attended, with attendance increasing each year.

F. Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Program (POCAN)

In 1997, new legislation allowed the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) to establish grant-funded Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) projects throughout the state. POCAN is designed to serve Medicaid-eligible first-time mothers through home visitation. Nine counties and one tribe were chosen for the POCAN program and receive state funding for local program operation. In addition, technical assistance is provided to agencies. The University of Wisconsin-Extension Family Living Programs received the contract from DCFS to provide and coordinate training and technical assistance for the ten sites. POCAN training and technical assistance was fully funded by CAPTA during 2001, 2002, and 2003.

*POCAN Training and Technical Assistance*

From POCAN's inception in 1999 through 2003, Family Living Programs conducted 121 training events. These events meant 3,040 contact days with the staff working in the 10 POCAN sites. Overall, the workshops rated 4.1 points out of 5, with 5 being the highest rating.

Areas of training included parent-child interaction, basic and advanced skill training for home visitors, brain development, Medicaid eligibility, Boundaries, Parenting Toddlers, Nutrition for Young Children, and a wide variety of other topics that research and project staff determined to be of value. Several workshops provided knowledge and skills needed to work with families impacted by domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty. Supervisors were also offered workshops to improve their ability to support staff.

To aid in program development and implementation and to ensure adherence to best practices, technical assistance was provided. Site visits were conducted, teleconferences were held, and face-to-face meetings for project directors and coordinators were held.

During this time, three curricula were written, piloted, and offered. One is a three-day basic skills workshop for home visitors, which is based on research describing a good home visitor. Two are workshops that help staff understand and work with people in generational poverty. All three workshops consistently earn the highest ratings.

Long-term evaluations of the basic skills workshop show that following the training, attendees did apply the knowledge and skills in their work. As a result of the training, program practices changed due to the exposure to family development principles; newly learned communication skills were used with families; visitors encouraged helpful outside relationships and referred families to community agencies for support; visitors encouraged mothers to involve fathers in parenting; visitors improved their ability to plan with families; and visitors improved their skills in boundary setting, confidentiality, and personal safety.

## *POCAN Evaluation*

A recent evaluation by the DHFS showed that children in the POCAN programs were 30% more likely to be immunized and half as likely to go to the emergency room. There were only one quarter as many reports of abuse or neglect and one quarter as many out of home placements.

A qualitative evaluation of the training component of POCAN was conducted as part of the larger evaluation. Among the findings:

- Face-to-face meetings for technical assistance provided valuable opportunities to receive clarification from state consultants and to network and learn from each other.
- Workshops raised awareness of, sensitivity to, and ability to address issues with which families struggle, such as depression, mental illness, domestic violence, substance abuse, and poverty.
- The basic skills workshop set a firm stage for strength-based work, ability to identify resources, and ways to engage and partner with families for positive outcomes for the child.
- Workshops enhanced staff understanding of child development and attachment and provided ways to help families understand and support their child's development.
- Attendance at workshops increased staff's confidence in their abilities and gave them the skills and tools to be successful with families.
- The workshops provided access to the latest research and trends and provided theoretical and practical strategies for working with families.
- Program quality was improved because research-based workshops imparted best practice standards, changes were made in supervision methods, increased attention was given to child development, and staff learned creative techniques for working with families.

Among the comments received on the evaluation:

- "My POCAN staff's growth and development has far exceeded the normal development of my Social Work staff who normally enter the field with minimal information in the area of child growth and development and therefore are only a coordinator of service rather than a provider."
- "Our program would not be what it is today without all the training offered to our staff."
- "The trainings were relevant, interesting and beneficial. There were always efforts made to anchor the learning through activities or practice."
- "POCAN has offered some of the best trainings I've attended in my seven years of supervising."

One of the twelve best practice standards that POCAN programs are expected to adhere to is: "Provide staff with intensive training specific to family assessment and home visitation." Evaluators recognized the value of the training component of POCAN and recommended the continuation of the training with any program expansion as training is an integral support to assure quality programs and services for families.

### *Review of 2003 Activities*

In order to support the effectiveness of the program, CAPTA funds were used to provide ongoing training and technical assistance for those involved in providing services for the local programs.

Approximately 460 training contacts were made in 2003, through various trainings.

Trainings provided in 2003 included:

- 3 3-day sessions of Home Visitation: The Basics
- 2 1-day sessions on use of the HOME Early Childhood Assessment Tool
- Parenting Toddlers
- Maintaining Personal and Professional Boundaries
- Empowerment Skills for Supervisors
- Parent-Infant Interaction for beginning home visitors
- 2 1-day sessions on listening and other skills that promote change
- Nurturing Parent-Child Interaction
- Parental Guidance for Young Children
- Breastfeeding and Nutrition for Young Children
- 2 1-day sessions on strategies for working with people in poverty
- 2-day conference: Fulfilling the Promise: A Conference for Wisconsin's Home Visitation Programs

The workshops averaged a 4.1 rating on a 5 point scale with 5 being the highest.

In addition, two technical assistance meetings were held for project coordinators and project managers.

In 2003, a new curriculum on strategies for working more effectively with families in generational poverty was developed and piloted. The home visitor basic skills curriculum was revised.

Beginning in FY 2005, the POCAN training program will be funded with IV-B Subpart II funds rather than CAPTA.

#### G. Improving the Leadership Skills of Public Child Welfare Managers

The DCFS recognizes that public child welfare administrators need assistance to carry out their critical leadership roles. In addition, training for child welfare staff is understood to be more than just change in the knowledge and skills possessed by staff persons, but also the springboard for organizational change, requiring actions by the agency administration.

In 1999, the DCFS offered the first Public Child Welfare Conference in the state. The conference is for administrators, managers, and supervisors in Wisconsin's public child welfare system. The conference provides an opportunity to update child welfare program managers in Wisconsin on national developments in child welfare practice, as well as to

discuss and plan new initiatives in our state. Although first designed to include child welfare staff from county, public human/social service agencies, it quickly changed focus to include other community partners who serve families in the public child welfare system.

Traditionally a two-day conference, the 2004 conference expanded to include another day designed specifically to be an interactive experience for supervisors to support them in addressing day to day practice issues related to child safety. The day concluded with a statewide meeting to discuss and refine policy developed as a result of new CAPTA requirements.

The agenda for each year's conference is determined based on the needs of administrators, program managers, and supervisors to provide leadership and assure the quality of decision making and positive outcomes for children and families. Each year attendance at the conference increases, with approximately 175 people participating in 2004.

The next annual Public Child Welfare Conference will be held in 2005. The content of the conference will continue to support the knowledge, skills, and values critical to successful leadership within child welfare agencies.

#### H. Training for CPS Caseworkers and Supervisors

##### *Training Curriculum Updates*

Most of the training received by CPS caseworkers and supervisors is provided by the four Child Welfare Training Partnerships, funded in part with CAPTA monies and whose curricula are determined through the Training Council and its Curriculum Committee, in which DCFS staff participate.

Wisconsin imported training curriculum out of Ohio from the Institute of Human Services (IHS). Over the last several years, Wisconsin has gone through a process of significantly revising some of the IHS CORE curricula. Revisions have been made to reflect new knowledge and research in the field, to include safety assessment and planning, and to reflect current practice in Wisconsin. There have been two CORE courses that have been revised: *Family Centered Child Welfare Services* and *Family Centered Case Assessment and Planning*. More detailed information follows.

##### *Core 103: Family-Centered Child Welfare Services*

This training was originally three days in length. It covered such topics as the historical, philosophical, and legal basis for child welfare, the identification and assessment of child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, risk assessment, developing knowledge about culture and cultural diversity, intake and screening of referrals, initial assessment/investigation, family-centered services and the role of the caseworker. There is no specific tool or assessment model taught or used in this training. Wisconsin does have specific tools and documentation formats used during the entire case process, referred to as the Wisconsin

Model. The decision was made to revise this CORE training to incorporate Wisconsin's specific laws, policies, tools, and formats. It was further decided to break out and expand on topic areas for this training, making it two separate trainings.

The CORE foundational level training is a two-day training designed for all child welfare caseworkers, regardless of job functions. *Family Centered Child Welfare Services* provides the conceptual foundation for public child welfare services. Content on the history and philosophy of child welfare explores child protection as a function of public agencies, emphasizing a strength-based, family centered approach. Content on culture examines the components of and influences on culture, including social class. This content emphasizes the need for individualization when working with families and reflection on the influence of the caseworker's cultural assumptions. Content on integration of helping and authority roles explores the need for both of these roles and their thoughtful integration in order to perform child welfare responsibilities. This training provides the conceptual basis for assessing child safety, including qualities of safe environments and parental protective capacity; criteria for assessing a child to be unsafe; the difference between risk and safety; and observational skills and assessment tools. Content on caseworker safety alerts participants to risks to their own safety and offers practical skills to maximize their safety in the field and in the office.

The next phase of the revisions/development will focus on training specific to the process of intake and initial assessment.

#### *Core 104: Family Centered Case Assessment and Planning*

This four day CORE training session was revised to include Wisconsin specific information related to the Wisconsin Model of family assessment, case planning, case evaluation, and case closure. The training also stresses the importance of proper case planning to assure timely, high quality services to families. It presents casework as the preferred intervention method to promote strengthening of families, permanence, and well being for children and positive change. The training also includes: (1) Strategies to engage family members in collaborative relationships which empower family members, and promote family preservation and prominence for children; and (2) Methods for conducting case reviews with families and writing concise, timely assessments and case plan information, with supporting documentation, into the family case record.

#### *Safety Assessment and Planning Training Updates*

As this is the core and critical aspect of all CPS work, training in the area of safety assessment and planning has been offered over the past 12 years in this state. Training sessions have been offered regularly by the CW Training Partnerships. As county agencies prepared to implement WiSACWIS and, therefore, the Wisconsin Model, an assessment was done as to whether agency staff needed updated training on assessing safety and developing safety plans. Training was provided to each county as needed.



In 2003, two county agencies were involved in a case where a young child who, with this family, was receiving ongoing CPS services was battered to death. A review by DCFS staff and others concluded that staff of both agencies needed additional training in developing sufficient safety plans and understanding how safety must be managed and reassessed during ongoing services. A two-day training to assist staff and supervisors was developed by ACTION for Child Protection and delivered in September of 2003 to the two involved counties and a neighboring county. This was the beginning of revisions in safety training that are currently underway and are discussed in the five-year Plan.

#### *Annual Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect*

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect took place in April of 2004. This conference has a long tradition of being multi-disciplinary in its focus. The conference encouraged persons in the fields of CPS, law enforcement, public health and medicine, domestic violence, law, education, prevention, and advocacy to come together to discuss joint issues and solutions. DCFS is a co-sponsor and participates each year on the planning committee.

Staff from the DCFS presented at this year's conference on Wisconsin's federal Child and Family Services Review. Findings from the review as well as preliminary plans towards improvement of the system were shared.

The 18<sup>th</sup> annual Wisconsin Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect is planned for April, 2005.

#### I. Coordinated/Integrated Service Teams in CPS Cases

The coordinated or integrated services team initiative began in 1999 with exploration as to how to communicate and coordinate better across disciplines, in order to provide better services to children and families. The participating systems include child welfare, AODA, mental health, developmental disabilities, schools, and Wisconsin Works (TANF program). Beginning in Milwaukee and with BMCW, the initiative has expanded over the past five years to a number of counties. The major objective is collaboration of service planning, development, and delivery that meets the needs of each family engaged in multiple services and systems, specifically child welfare, substance abuse, Wisconsin Works, and mental health. The model also emphasizes a strengths-based approach and strong family involvement in case planning and progress evaluation.

CAPTA funds have not been put directly into the program, but DHFS staff funded by CAPTA have provided technical assistance in identifying issues that need to be clarified, helping to develop a clear focus on safety that is consistent with CPS standards, and also by participating in cross-training activities. This involvement will continue.

## J. Purpose of the Substantiation Decision

Concerns about the purpose of substantiating child abuse and neglect began in 1999. This came about in part because the substantiation decision began to be used to deny persons access to certain employment and licensure, although it was not originally intended to be used for that purpose. This was compounded by concerns about the accuracy of substantiation decision making, which varies from county to county.

In 1999, a comprehensive policy was issued to guide in the case finding (e.g., substantiated, unsubstantiated) decision making. However, concerns about accuracy continued. In 2000, a survey was conducted of all counties to assess substantiation decision making. A set of scenarios were developed, and county staff were asked whether they would substantiate child abuse or neglect, assuming all of the information was correct. The result was a significant amount of variation in decisions. As this survey was conducted in regional meetings, county supervisors were able to hear the differences among the counties and became more concerned with the differences. The appeals process, instituted in October of 1998, also raised concerns among counties as to how the substantiation decision is made and whether everyone was using the same criteria.

At the same time, counties began to question why so much time, effort, and expense were put into making and defending the substantiation decision. Some CPS professionals began questioning the usefulness of the substantiation decision, especially since the *CPS Investigation Standards* placed little emphasis on the substantiation decision and much more emphasis on assessing safety and risk. Many others, including those in the broader child protection system, however, continued to believe that the substantiation decision was important.

Over the past several years, the DCFS, in conjunction with county staff, has continued to emphasize the safety decision and marginalize the substantiation decision in the development of policies and standards. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*, issued in 2002, established the standard that all families where a child was determined to be unsafe, not children determined to be substantiated, must be opened for ongoing services. Other groups began questioning the substantiation decision. The Executive Steering Committee for the CFSR raised the issue and, more recently, the PEP Core Team also raised the issue and questioned the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision.

Progress in this area has been intentionally slow to give everyone the opportunity to come to the same point of openness to explore the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision. With support from county managers and others, such as the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Social Work, a significant initiative to study substantiation is planned for the coming year.

## K. Citizen Review Panels

In response to the federal CAPTA requirements for states to establish Citizen Review Panels (CRP), Wisconsin established two county panels and one panel with individuals representing each of the counties in a judicial district. The state asked for counties to volunteer and three proposals were selected: Marathon County, Outagamie County and the counties in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District. The multi-county panel was to be a pilot project.

Extensive training and education was provided to the Panel members, both in terms of the role of Citizen Review Panels and child welfare legislation, policy and practice. The CRP in Outagamie and Marathon counties are multi-functional and, in addition to their role as a Citizen Review Panel, they provide essential input to the local county child welfare agency. Among the areas they also address are: helping to improve coordination and collaboration among various public and private entities that provide programs and services to the children and families of their county; and identifying community needs and working to educate the community. Because of the size of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Panel, it limited its focus to CRP issues.

For a variety of reasons, the pilot panel in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District did not work out. The primary issues related to participation and focus. However, LaCrosse County, the largest county in the Judicial District volunteered to establish a panel and share information with the other counties. The new panel has been established and has been going through an orientation phase.

Several state staff are working with the panels and have scheduled a series of meeting to work with them ensure appropriate implementation of the new CAPTA requirements and also to complete plans for their participation in Wisconsin's PEP implementation. Plans for the future also include the addition of a fourth citizen review panel in Milwaukee County. This is currently under development to comply with CAPTA and offer important citizen support and participation in Milwaukee county child welfare.

The CY 2003 Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports are attached the plan.

## **Independent Living - Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) and Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program**

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program provides statewide services and support for youth in and exiting out-of-home care in accordance with the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. This report addresses Sec. 477 (42 U.S.C. 677) (a) of the Social Security Act as required for the final report.

Data provided throughout this final report were compiled for the state's most recent reporting period, January 1 - December 31, 2003. Wisconsin does not have an electronic database system for capturing and reporting independent living (IL) data. Accuracy of the data in this report is dependent upon each agency's interpretation of the IL eligibility and program criteria and the manual recording and calculation of demographic and services data. It is anticipated that the quality of IL data and reporting will improve when federal reporting requirements are finalized and these requirements are implemented via the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (WISACWIS).

Wisconsin is a county-administered system and programs may vary in their approaches to implementing and administering independent living services. This report attempts to summarize all local efforts, providing a generalized accounting of services design and outcomes. State activities are also noted and described where appropriate.

The following sections provide detailed data and descriptions of CFCIP plan goal progress, specific program accomplishments, barriers encountered, and the progress made toward the purposes of 1-6 of Section 477(a). These descriptions also assure that CFCIP plan certifications were upheld.

### **1. Identification of children likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age and provision of transitional support.**

In 2001, the provision of independent living services for youth in and exiting foster care became mandated for all counties and tribes providing child welfare and child protective services in Wisconsin. Prior to this time, only 46 counties and 2 tribes were operating formal independent living programs designed to assist youth with achieving self-sufficiency upon leaving out-of-home care placement. As of 2001 to the present, 71 counties, 2 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections receive funding to serve all youth eligible for IL services.

Wisconsin's definition of eligibility for independent living services includes youth in out-of-home care placement for at least six months after the age of 15 years and up to the age of 21. Youth in out-of-home care and adopted after the age of 15 are also eligible. Youth participation in the IL program is voluntary.

The following table demonstrates Wisconsin's progress in identifying and serving these youth:

**Table A. Program Participants**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Total Eligible Youth</b>	<b>Total Youth Receiving Services</b>	<b>18-21 year-olds Receiving Services</b>	<b>Tribal Youth Receiving Services</b>
2000	2019	1273	Unknown	Unknown
2001	3642	1801	Unknown	Unknown
2002	3982	3383	769	132
2003	4326	3123	678	116

The following table contains data available on most of the youth receiving services in 2003:

**Table B. Participant Demographics**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Youth</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Demographic data available	2,883	100
Female	1,471	51
Male	1331	46
White	1447	50
African American	1153	40
American Indian	102	4
Asian	45	2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	5	Less than 1
Latin/Hispanic	139	5
Other Race	79	3
Mental health disabilities	389	13
Developmental disabilities	130	5
Learning disabilities	546	19
Other disabilities	185	6
Never married	2,851	99
Youth who are Parents	300	10

The majority (i.e., 1,912 out of 3,123 IL participants) of youth receiving IL services in Wisconsin is in out-of-home care placement. Some other types of living arrangements experienced by IL eligible youth during the report period (CY 2003) are listed below.

**Table C. Living Arrangements**

<b>Living Arrangement</b>	<b># of Youth</b>
Out-of-Home Care placement	1,912
Homeless	99
Adult Correctional Facility	78
Juvenile Correctional Facility	186
Subsidized Housing	31
Transitional Housing	80
Independent Living	328

The goals of Wisconsin's Independent Living Program are to help youth achieve higher rates of adequate shelter, educational attainment, employment and employment stability, healthy relationships, and financial independence. In addition, the state will see lower rates of incarceration, public assistance utilization, and physical and sexual victimization. All youth will receive developmental skills training and independent living preparation services appropriate to their age and development. Services are designed to assure their capacity to exercise judgment commensurate with their age, abilities, and strengths and needs. All youth aged 16 and older exiting out-of-home care will leave care with a minimum of the following:

- Driver's license or preparation for obtaining a driver's license or other access to transportation to school, employment, and other critical activities;
- High school diploma or GED or enrollment in an educational program designed to result in a high school diploma or GED;
- Written employment history;
- Copies of their birth certificate, social security card, and medical records;
- Access to funds adequate to support themselves for a period of three months following exit from care;
- Access to and knowledge of local resources, including but not limited to food pantries, human service agencies, health clinics, and mental health facilities; and
- A safe and stable living environment.

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are providing an array of services designed to help youth achieve independence and self-sufficiency. Agencies must submit an annual updated work plan describing current and following year IL services and report annually on the progress achieved and challenges addressed.

The total number of youth receiving services for CY 2003 is 3,123. Data was provided to the State from the local agencies on 2,883 of these youth. The following table identifies the services received and the total number of youth that received each service during the report period:

**Table D. Independent Living Services & Participants**

<b>Service Received</b>	<b># of Youth</b>
Secondary Education	1706
Post Secondary Education	281
Vocational & Employment Support	1459
Daily Living Skills	2091
Budget & Financial Management	1635
Housing Assistance	666
Youth Development	1099
Mentor	814
Health Education & Prevention	1373
Sex Education	1777
Mental Health	1616
AODA	462
Financial & Medical Assistance	2203

In addition to the services reported here, efforts to inform agencies, provide technical assistance, address program-related issues, and strengthen IL services for youth and their families have been ongoing since 2001.

The DCFS issued DCFS Memo Series 2001-06, dated April 11, 2001, to all counties and tribes mandating the provision of independent living services for youth in and exiting out-of-home care placement. The memo provided all agencies with IL eligibility criteria for youth, levels of local funding, and directed programs to develop services in accordance with the Wisconsin June 2000 task force report, *Independent Living for Children in Out-Of-Home Care*. The task force report summarizes the research, "Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood: Outcomes 12 to 18 Months After Leaving Out-Of-Home Care," conducted by Mark E. Courtney and Irving Piliavin, and provides recommendations as to how the current child welfare system can achieve measurable improvements.

In addition to the memo announcing the program, statewide memos issued by DCFS continue to be a key source of IL updates, information, and direction for local agencies.

The DCFS Memo 2001-06 was followed by Independent Living Roundtable meetings in 2001. These meetings were and continue to be held each year in various parts of the state to discuss IL policies, regulations, funding, and practice issues. Each meeting is designed to allow ample time to address any questions or issues that occur at the local level. Meetings are facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator and attended by county and tribal independent living coordinators, private agencies contracted to provide IL services, the Department of Corrections IL worker, Assistant Area Administrators for Regional Offices, and other interested parties. These meetings update caseworkers on state and federal policies and regulations, help train caseworkers regarding current and effective IL services and supports, and allow agencies to share best practice information through discussion of current cases and IL issues.

Development and implementation of IL training was initiated in 2001 and continues through the present. New training was created and some existing curricula (e.g., foster parent training) were reviewed and revised to include a component on IL. Training has included: Life Skills Development through the National Resource Center for Youth Development and NEW Partnership for Children and Families; Independent Living Basic Training by the State IL Coordinator; Engaging, Empowering, Emancipating; Working Together; and Assessing and Assisting the Adolescent by Norma Ginther and the Southern Child Welfare Training Partnership. In addition, IL meetings have been convened to address specific topics of interest, such as Planning and Preparing Youth for Higher Education presented by the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group.

## 2. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain employment

Since implementation of Wisconsin's IL Program in 2001, annual reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections show that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the areas of education, training, and employment related services.

All youth are assessed for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance. These assessments, along with youth input, are utilized in developing employment related goals for the Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP).

The methods for helping youth with employment related services vary according to program and area of the state. Rural programs may not have access to as many community resources as are found in urban areas of the state. The IL Coordinator may be the trainer or service provider, or he/she may serve in an outreach and referral capacity, connecting youth to local resources already providing the needed services.

IL Coordinators conducting training and experiential learning report employment related activities that include assisting youth with: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work related experience. Community awareness trips and speakers on employment related services and topics are often utilized. Meetings are arranged with high school counselors and tutors to help assess youth educational needs for employment and provide a support network for youth.

Referral and outreach efforts link youth to community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. These connections may include typical job service programs, such as Job Corps, local job centers, Workforce Resource Center, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, job fairs, and other community agencies and private providers. Other linkages may address individual youth needs (e.g., counseling services, medication management) which may impact employment success.



The total number of youth participating in IL services in CY 2003 is 3,123. Data is available for 2,883 of these youth. The following table indicates the number of participants that received vocational related assistance during the report period:

**Table E. Vocational Services**

<b>Type of Service/Assistance</b>	<b># of Youth Receiving Service</b>
Secondary Education	1,706
Post Secondary Education	281
Vocational & Employment Support	1,459
Paid or unpaid training	49
Unemployment compensation	5
Youth currently employed	496
Average wage = \$5.30	
Driver's education completed	218
Driver's license achieved	181

### 3. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are assisting youth in the area of post-secondary education and training.

Education is vital to successful functioning in the adult world; however, youth living in out-of-home care are completing high school and participating in post-secondary education at significantly lower rates than youth who were not placed outside of their homes. In 2001, DCFS tackled this challenge by soliciting the help of the higher education community. Professionals from child welfare, private colleges, technical colleges, and the state university joined forces to help foster care youth access and achieve post-secondary education and training. The collaborating group became known as the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group.

The HEOY Advisory Group met, planned, and devised several approaches to address the educational challenges faced by foster care youth. Informational memos were developed and disseminated statewide to inform child welfare and juvenile justice caseworkers about the HEOY group and share contact information for group members. Higher education resource materials were developed for statewide dissemination. A panel and presentation were created to increase awareness about the youth, problems, and solutions and presented to child welfare caseworkers, various levels of higher education staff, foster parents, and other interested parties across the state. These workshops provide information about:

- The educational challenges faced by children placed outside of their homes;
- How to utilize school counselors as a resource for assisting and motivating youths to attend post-secondary vocational and education programs;

- How to help youths and families access state university and private college services and education;
- DCFS scholarship program and dissemination of application forms;
- Brochures and informational handouts for post secondary education; and
- Education and Training Vouchers Program guidelines

Additional HEOY activities and accomplishments include:

- In 2001, Marian College of Fond du Lac developed a Foster Care Grant specifically for youths previously placed in out-of-home care.
- Development and dissemination of DCFS Information Memo 2002-05 - This memo informs county and tribal child welfare agencies about the educational issues faced by youths in and exiting out-of-home care placement. It also informs them of the development of the HEOY group and provides a resource document, "Let's Get These Kids in College!" also developed by the advisory group.
- In 2002, the DCFS Scholarship fund was utilized at 100% for the first time.
- In 2003, DCFS Scholarship awards increased to \$110,000
- In 2004, the DCFS Scholarship fund increased to \$125,000
- The required parent signature was removed from the University of Wisconsin college application form.

The DCFS has a scholarship program that is funded with CFCIP funding. The program provides scholarship awards for IL eligible youth that have been accepted into an institution of higher education. The first years of the scholarship allowed one time only awards up to \$2,500. In 2004, this criterion was revised to allow subsequent awards up to \$5,000 per youth annually. As of May 2004, over \$125,000 has been expended and the DCFS is seeking additional ways to fund this program.

The following table summarizes scholarship awards during the past three years:

**Table F. DCFS Scholarship Program**

<b>Year</b>	<b># of Scholarship Awards</b>	<b>Amount of Scholarship Awards</b>
2001	30	\$ 55,619
2002	52	\$ 87,545
2003	54	\$ 109,250

Agencies report various methods for working with youth and families to help youth achieve higher education and training. The IL Coordinators initiate many of the post-secondary-related activities. Lac du Flambeau tribe reports having a Tribal Education Department to which youth can be referred, but generally it is the IL Coordinator taking the lead to ensure youth are aware of and participate in activities dedicated to post-secondary opportunities.

Preparation for post-secondary education must begin several years prior to high school completion. Individual education plans containing individualized goals and objectives are developed for each youth. Coordinators work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting the necessary requirements for post-secondary admission. Where available, youth are connected to precollege programs.

Programs designed to address youth needs in accessing and achieving higher education consist of helping youth with: visiting colleges, applying for admission and financial aide, finding resources available in the community and on campus, obtaining subsidies for educational and training supplies, and dealing with other costs associated with college and training. Caseworkers assist youth with finding safe and stable housing, including individualized efforts to secure housing with relatives or other trusted adults in the area. They also provide ongoing emotional support to youth prior to and while attending the post-secondary institutions.

The following table indicates services delivered and some educational outcomes achieved in 2003.

**Table G. Educational Services and Achievements**

<b>Service Provided or Educational Outcome</b>	<b># of Youth</b>
Secondary Education services	1,706
Post Secondary Education services	281
Driver's education completed	218
Driver's license achieved	181
GED achieved	127
High School Diploma	279
Vocational Certificate or License	46
Associate Degree	2
Bachelor's Degree or higher	0
DCFS Scholarships awarded	54

4. Provide personal and emotional support through mentors and promotion of interaction with dedicated adults

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections indicate that 100% of these agencies are attempting to connect youth with mentors and other caring adults in their communities. The total number of youth connected to mentors for the report period is 814. The most commonly cited connections for youth are foster parents, biological family members, teachers, social workers, IL coordinators, and mentors.

Independent living coordinators take the lead in connecting youth to caring adults. Many natural connections (e.g., biological family, foster parents, special education teachers,

social workers) occur and are encouraged. For youth that do not readily develop significant connections with adults in their lives, the coordinators assist youth with creating and sustaining such relationships. IL coordinators help youth identify potential adults in their lives and then work with them to build communication and relationships. The Independent Living Transition Plan requires that names and contact information be recorded for peers or adults identified by youth.

Youth in out-of-home care are often connected to mentors, and these relationships usually continue after the youth leaves care. Mentors may be individuals in the community or obtained through community agencies that provide this support service. Support teams may also be utilized for increasing youth connections to others. Tribal IL coordinators may coordinate with other programs within the tribe to connect youth to adults.

5. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services for former foster care youth aged 18-21 years. Ensure youth participation and personal responsibility for preparation and transition.

Annual IL reports from counties, tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare indicate that 100% of these agencies have developed services for IL eligible youth aged 18-21 years. The number of 18-21-year-olds receiving services during the report period is 678. These youth received room and board assistance in the amount of \$87,815.

Agencies report varying methods for engaging and serving youth aged 18-21 years that have left out-of-home care placement. Programs strive to provide youth with life history and critical documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security cards, insurance cards) prior to leaving care. Many youth maintain contact with former social workers, case managers, or IL coordinators. Other youth refuse to continue contact with anyone associated with the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. All youth are provided with information about community resources (e.g., food, economic assistance, housing assistance, counseling) prior to leaving care. They are encouraged to maintain regular contact with caseworkers; however, crisis support is available to all youth.

Services and support for 18-21-year-olds may be provided through the agency and IL Coordinator; however, some agencies contract with private agencies to serve this older population. In Milwaukee County, all youth aging out of care are referred to Lad Lake Connections Program. This private agency provides financial, housing, counseling, employment, and other needed services to former foster care youth. Lad Lake staff work closely with and build positive, familiar relationships with youth. A food pantry is also available on site. Children's Service Society of Wisconsin is another agency with which several counties (e.g., Dunn, Forest, Marquette) contract for IL services.

Outreach efforts to contact youth who have left care are ongoing and moderately successful. The most frequent contact methods used for youth that have left care include letters to the youth and telephone calls to friends, family, and other youth acquaintances. Two larger counties, Milwaukee and Dane, utilize Independent Living newsletters to maintain contact and keep youth informed about available services and assistance.

Agencies report that ongoing contact and relationship building with youth while in out-of-home-care placement increases the likelihood of continued contact, relationships, and assistance after leaving care. All programs report instances of youth leaving care and refusing further assistance or contact with anyone connected to the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

Services typically include financial assistance for youth who have left care. Financial assistance generally includes providing youth with funds or stipends to help pay for rent, utilities, car insurance, health insurance, household furnishings, drivers licenses, and employment and educational expenses. CFCIP funds are often utilized for these types of expenses.

Youth with disabilities or challenging behaviors may need specialized services and supports to help them achieve individual levels of self-sufficiency. IL Coordinators and caseworkers ensure that, where appropriate, youth are referred and connected to Long-Term Support Programs for mental health, supportive living arrangements, supported employment, ongoing daily needs, mentoring, and other special needs.

Each eligible youth in out-of-home care must have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that is based on an independent living skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. Each youth exiting out-of-home care after the age of 17 years must have an ILTP that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care, identifies ongoing independent living needs and outcomes, and describes how ongoing independent living needs will be met. Youth must participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence.

The plans, services, and activities should address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- High school education, post secondary education, or training
- Career planning and employment
- Safe and stable housing
- Transportation
- Health and medical care
- Knowledge/use of community resources and support systems
- Financial self-sufficiency
- Youth's self goals

The Independent Living Transition Plan and activities should include:

- Measurable goals and objectives
- Experiential training for youth where possible
- Identification of community resources available and utilized
- A description of how youth will participate in plan development and activities

## 6. Make available vouchers for post-secondary education and training

Wisconsin did not receive Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program approval or funding until late 2003 although efforts to help youth access and achieve higher education have been ongoing since 2001. See item (3) for detailed information about higher education for youth.

Wisconsin's ETV Program was designed and implemented through a collaborative process facilitated by the State Independent Living Coordinator. Independent Living Coordinators throughout the state were surveyed regarding their experiences with IL services and higher education. They were asked to identify potential services, equipment, and other items that would benefit youth accessing and participating in higher education and training programs. A meeting was held with the HEOY Advisory Group to gather input about the pending ETV Program and the ongoing DCFS Scholarship Program. All of this input was incorporated into the Federal Application for ETV Program funding and state ETV Program Guidelines.

The ETV Program was implemented on January 1, 2004. All counties, two tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare received ETV funding to locally support and assist youth with post-secondary related activities and costs. The DCFS Scholarship Program funding was increased to \$125,000 for scholarship awards in 2004. Data for ETV Program youth, services, and expenditures and other educational outcomes will not be available until the end of calendar year 2004.

## 7. Barriers

IL services were implemented in all counties statewide. Services are designed to address the CFCIP plan goals and objectives, the June 2000 *Independent Living for Children In Out-Of-Home Care* report, the Chafee Act, and individual youth needs. Several barriers to achieving desirable outcomes in all areas for all youth were encountered. Some barriers such as geographic challenges are consistently noted across agencies in rural communities. Other commonly reported challenges for many agencies involve funding and youth. A summary of these barriers follows:

- It is difficult to monitor and support the needs of youth leaving care that relocate to other counties and states. The 18-21-year-olds are a transient group and maintaining contact is difficult.
- Many youth are resistive to agency involvement. They are not motivated and refuse to participate in IL activities. Some do not desire or see the need to pursue higher education.
- Youth with cognitive delays and emotional challenges are difficult to serve effectively as are youth with multiple legal infractions.

- In some rural communities there is a lack of employment opportunities, transportation, service providers, and community resources, all of which are critical to providing quality IL support and helping youth become self sufficient.
- Some foster parents and other caregivers may not see it as their responsibility to help youth gain IL skills. Life skills development is seen as an extra burden and they refuse to participate in training.
- Some agencies refuse to allow youth to participate in driver's education and obtain drivers licenses while in care. The commonly cited reason for this is concern about liability to the agency or foster parents.
- There is a lack of health care options for youth leaving care after 18 years of age.
- There is a lack of housing options for 17-year-olds who do not or will not remain in OHC placement.
- Agencies report ongoing service challenges due to a lack of sufficient IL funding to support their programs. In addition to a lack of IL funding, decreases in IL services may also occur due to agency budget cuts where other funds were used to support these services for youth. Lack of resources also contributes to a lack of staff support and higher staff turnover.

## **Tribal Child Welfare**

### **Tribal Child Welfare in Wisconsin**

In conjunction with the Tribal Affairs Unit of the Department, the DCFS has several ongoing practices to ensure effective communication with the 11 recognized tribes in Wisconsin and to support tribal child welfare services. The DCFS gives funding directly to the tribes through the Consolidated Family Services Allocation, which eliminates individualized funding streams and assists tribes in providing services to families. The DCFS consults with tribes before issuing standards and policies addressing child welfare concerns and involves tribal staff on interview panels for state staff positions. Tribes receive TANF funding for the Kinship Care program and attend Kinship Care program meetings.

Currently, tribes manage services for Indian children in out-of-home care through written agreements, called "161 Agreements," with individual counties. The original intent of the 161 Agreements was to assure county payment for out-of-home care placements ordered through the tribal courts. Some of the agreements have since been expanded to cover support and treatment services to children in care and their families, IV-E eligibility determinations, permanency planning requirements, independent living, and, in some cases, additional agreements related to child protective service investigations and removals. The DCFS monitors the development of the 161 Agreements and at times has arranged for a facilitator to help in negotiating the agreements. The 161 Agreements created a mechanism resulting in improved communication and negotiations between county departments and tribes.

At the present time, most of the 11 tribes in Wisconsin have established tribal courts to deal with child welfare issues. Tribes with no tribal court and, in some cases, tribes with courts will refer cases to the county child welfare agency. In most cases, when an allegation of abuse or neglect of an Indian child comes into a county agency, the county agency conducts the investigation in conjunction with child welfare staff of the tribe.

### **Consultation with Tribes**

Communication with the tribes is done through tribal chairpersons, as the official contact persons for the tribes, and tribal human service program coordinators. Chairpersons and program coordinators receive DCFS letters, numbered memos, and other program instructions. The primary forum for having group conversations with tribal officials is through the annual DHFS conference addressing human service issues with tribes. Meetings with tribal officials on child welfare issues are coordinated with the conference. Other group meetings with tribal officials are scheduled as needed to discuss specific issues. For issues involving individual tribes, DCFS communication with the tribe involved through the tribal chairperson or other tribal officials. Individual meetings with tribes are held as needed with Department Tribal Affairs or Area Administration staff representing DCFS or with DCFS directly.



Bimonthly staff meetings are held between DCFS and the Tribal Affairs Unit staff with tribal child welfare staff to discuss Indian child welfare issues. These staff meetings are used to identify Indian child welfare issues that require discussion at higher levels with tribal officials and Department managers. Recent staff meetings have focused on ICWA training and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Oneida Tribe facilitated a tribal stakeholder interview for the CFSR in August 2003 and an Oneida child welfare supervisor participated as a CFSR case reviewer.

Tribes are currently represented on the Child Welfare Executive Steering Committee (ESC) by a representative of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council. Discussions are underway to identify ways to improve tribal representation on the ESC and other DCFS standing committees and ad hoc workgroups. Improving the communication and coordination with tribes will be a major theme for Wisconsin's CFSR program improvement plan.

### Indian Child Welfare Act

In Wisconsin, tribes which have a court system utilized to place children into out-of-home care enter into "161 Agreements" with the home county. In essence, these agreements give full faith and credit to the tribe in terms of licensing foster homes and placing children in out-of-home care. The county is then financially responsible for the cost of the placements pursuant to the Agreement. In some cases, the agreement specifies a maximum amount of such funding; in other cases, the amount is open-ended. The agreements also describe in detail which agency (the county or the tribe) is responsible for determining Title IV-E eligibility, for implementing permanency planning requirements, etc.

Over the years, there have been issues that have arisen in the negotiation of these agreements. This is due in part to the fact that the state has issued a policy defining what information must be contained in the agreement and suggests guidelines for what information might be contained in the agreement, but has not developed any sort of materials on the process of negotiating the agreements.

The DCFS will continue efforts to enhance 161 Agreements to assure that all such agreements address any additional issues that can improve services for Indian children and their families. Enhancements will be pursued in 2004 and later revisions will be made, as necessary, after initiatives that influence the content of the agreements are completed, including the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*, the administrative rule on permanency planning and reasonable efforts, and statutory changes made to comply with the ASFA.

There have been questions about the role and responsibility of tribes, county Child Protective Services agencies, and the state in child welfare cases that are not covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act. The DCFS has requested technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment this year to study the issue and

develop guidelines for how the state, county CPS agencies, and tribes can best work together to meet the needs of Indian children.

Training on the ICWA is provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships in Wisconsin. A detailed ICWA training is offered in addition to the core course on legal issues, which includes information on the ICWA. The DCFS provides technical assistance to the county child welfare agencies when questions on compliance with ICWA arise.

DCFS intends to codify all of the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act into Chapters 48 (the Children's Code) and 938 (the Juvenile Justice Code) to facilitate an understanding of ICWA requirements on the parts of county and state caseworkers, supervisors, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other professionals involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

While awaiting this codification, DCFS will enhance our efforts to provide training on ICWA for all affected individuals. DCFS will also issue a numbered memo on related ICWA issues including notification requirements, placement preferences, and identification of children as Indian children. This will facilitate our attempts to remedy problems identified by Indian child welfare staff in the processes related to the Child and Family Services Review, the Child and Family Services Plan, and the tribal priorities document.

The Bureau of Programs and Policies will also be hiring a staff person to serve as Indian Child Welfare Consultant to focus on programs and issues affecting both tribes and Indian families served by local child welfare agencies.

## **V. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

This section of the plan addresses additional information specifically required for state plans as specified in the federal plan instructions in Memo ACYF-CB-PI-04-01. Some of the required items are addressed under other sections of the plan, such as the CAPTA and Adoption Program sections.

### Diligent Recruitment

In September 1999, Wisconsin developed a recruitment campaign that was kicked off with the support of the Governor. This was a one-time campaign that included radio, television, and movie trailer ads. The effort covered one year and was very successful. Even today people talk about the ads that they either loved or hated, but they are remembered. Unfortunately, outside the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), there were extremely limited funds available to sustain or build on the recruitment effort. We did develop a recruitment video that counties could use with their prospective foster families. This video has received limited use. In BMCW, there has been a more significant amount of recruitment funds made available. While recent efforts have received some response from potential foster/adoptive families, the ads have had limited success.

Wisconsin has found word-of-mouth to be one of our greatest recruitment tools. DCFS has also found that a large percentage of special needs adoptions, more than 85% in the state and more than 95% in BMCW, are the result of foster home conversions. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that our adoption assistance (AA) reimbursement rates tend to be higher than what the family received for fostering the child. Wisconsin reimburses through AA up to \$2,000 per month. This has put stress on our counties through the depletion of their resources. As a result, in Wisconsin, our future recruitment efforts will be for foster/adoptive parents with more emphasis on training and preparation of these resources for the challenges they will encounter.

### Transfers of Children to Juvenile Justice

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children in the custody of child welfare agencies who are transferred to the custody of juvenile justice agencies. No information is included in this progress report. Efforts to prepare for the future collection of data are described later Section VIII of the plan.

### Child Welfare Demonstration Projects

Wisconsin does not have any child welfare waiver demonstration projects currently in operation. The DCFS submitted a federal IV-E waiver request for a Subsidized Guardianship program in January 2004 that is pending federal approval. More information is provided about the Guardianship waiver in Section VIII of the plan.

## **VI. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

In August 2003, the Wisconsin child protective services program was evaluated by the federal Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and was the 43<sup>rd</sup> state to undergo this Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). As occurred in every state, the ACF reviewed 50 cases in three counties which were intended to represent performance across the state, held focus groups, and evaluated data and a state self-assessment. Like every other state in the nation, Wisconsin was found in substantial non-conformance with many of the outcomes in the CFSR.

The following outcome areas and systemic factors must be addressed in the PEP:

- Safety Outcome 1 - Protection of children from abuse and neglect
- Safety Outcome 2 - Maintain children safely in their homes where appropriate
- Permanency Outcome 1 - Permanence and stability of living situations
- Permanency Outcome 2 - Preserving continuity of family relationships
- Well-Being Outcome 2 - Educational services to children
- Well-Being Outcome 3 - Physical and mental health services
- Case Review System - Written case plans and regular permanency hearings
- Quality Assurance - State program standards and quality assurance activities
- Staff and Provider Training - Training for local agency staff and foster parents
- Service Array - Services available to children and families

The state received its CFSR results in January 2004, and was given 90 days to produce a statewide program improvement plan in response. The Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) was submitted to ACF in April 2004 and is currently under federal review. Once approved, Wisconsin will implement the PEP over a two-year period.

The PEP was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of seven months, and was guided by an internal planning team consisting of the DCFS Administrator, Bureau and Office Directors, and a Facilitator/Coordinator. The internal planning team recruited a PEP Core Team of more than sixty (60) child welfare experts, including representatives of counties, tribes, advocates, and other stakeholders, to develop improvement strategies for the PEP.

The Core Team began by identifying the underlying conditions in families, communities, child welfare agencies, and state government that impact Wisconsin's child welfare operations and performance. The Core Team identified overarching strategies for program improvement and developed and prioritized specific action steps to improve CFSR outcomes within the two-year timeframe. The work of the PEP Team was instrumental in reaching agreement on the overarching strategies that form the basis for the state objectives for 2005-2009 described in Section III of this plan.

The Core Team selected the final PEP action steps by applying three strategic criteria. Action steps must be: 1) perceived by the Core Team as effective in addressing the very specific findings of the CFSR; 2) substantially achievable within two years; and 3) practicable within the constraints of the current fiscal environment and the authority of

child welfare agencies. These action steps are included in the 2005-2009 plan.

The full PEP, including the "PEP matrix," which identifies the specific action steps, is available at: <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>

#### Status of PEP Implementation

The Wisconsin PEP is currently under review by ACF and updates to the plan will be necessary to provide clarification and establish performance improvement targets for the PEP period. It is anticipated that the PEP period will be calendar years 2005 and 2006, assuming that the PEP is approved by the end of 2004.

The PEP Matrix identifies specific timeframes for implementation of action steps. The PEP Matrix is based on 10 quarters, with the first two quarters being the period from July to December 2004. During this period, regardless of when the PEP is finalized with ACF, DCFS will begin implementation of the action steps. The specific timeframes for completion of action steps will depend upon final PEP approval.

Once the PEP is approved, DCFS must submit quarterly reports showing progress in implementing the action steps and the impact of implementation on program outcomes. It is anticipated that the first quarterly report will be submitted in Spring 2005 based on the January - March 2005 quarter being the first quarter of the official PEP period.

The Annual Services and Progress Report portion of the Child and Family Services Plan will be used to provide annual updates on PEP implementation and program outcomes.

#### National Performance Standards

The CFSR process includes analyses of statewide data as reported for NCANDS and AFCARS purposes on six safety and permanency measures. For the Wisconsin CFSR review, the state was determined to be in non-conformance with five of the six measures. The PEP action steps, while targeted at specific aspects of performance, are also designed to improve statewide performance on the national standards. The final approved PEP will include specific improvement targets for the five measures.

The following table shows current state performance on the national performance standards. For some items, alternative data sources must be used to determine the state performance for 2002 and 2003. DCFS is currently working with the Administration for Children and Families Chicago Regional Office and the Children's Bureau to obtain approval for the methodology to determine the 2002 and 2003 performance.

Wisconsin Achievement of National Performance Standards				
Performance Standards (Percent)	National Standard)	WI Data 2001	WI Data 2002	WI Data 2003
<b>Safety Outcome 1 – Recurrence of Maltreatment</b> Of all children who were victims of substantiated maltreatment report in the first 6 months of the year, what percent were victims of another substantiated report within a 6-month period?	6.1 or less	6.9 *	NA	NA
<b>Safety Outcome 1 – Maltreatment While in Care</b> Of all children in out-of-home care in first 9 months of the year, what percent experienced maltreatment by foster parents or facility staff members?	0.57 or less	0.61 *	0.26 *	NA
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Re-entry to Care</b> Of all children who entered out-of-home care during the year, what percent re-entered care within 12 months of a prior out-of-home care episode?	8.6 or less	25.5	22.2	21.5
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Reunification</b> Of all children reunified from out-of-home care during the year, what percent were reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care?	76.2 or more	71.0	66.5	65.2
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Timely Adoption</b> Of all children adopted from out-of-home care during the year, what percent were adopted within 24 months of their entry into out-of-home care?	32.0 or more	21.2 *	NA	NA
<b>Permanency Outcome 1 – Placement Stability</b> Of all children in out-of-home care during the year for less than 12 months, what percent experienced no more than 2 placement settings?	86.7 or more	93.8	92.3	92.6

Sources: State performance is computed from federal AFCARS or NCANDS data except where noted.

\* Estimate based on state data approved as alternate source of data for the performance standard.

## VII. CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM SYSTEMIC FACTORS

This section of the Child and Family Services Plan addresses the seven systemic factors that are examined in the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) of state child welfare programs. The systemic factors relate to the infrastructure of the child welfare service system that supports the delivery of effective services to children and families. This section of the plan also covers research and evaluation activities.

The results of the 2003 Wisconsin CFSR identified information system capacity, responsiveness to the community, and foster and adoptive parent recruitment as strengths. The results identified case review system, quality assurance, training, and service array as areas needing improvements. Specific action steps to address the CFSR results are included in the initial draft of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) submitted for federal review on April 14, 2004.

### A. Information System Capacity

Wisconsin is completing implementation of a comprehensive Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, called WiSACWIS, which will be used by all local agencies, the BMCW, and the state Adoption Program. The WiSACWIS project began development in March 1999 with a donor SACWIS system transferred from New Mexico. The DHFS has contracted with American Management Systems, Inc. (AMS) to fully implement the WiSACWIS and roll the system out to all counties statewide.

WiSACWIS was implemented in phases and the last group of counties is implementing the system on June 28, 2004, at which point WiSACWIS will be fully operational statewide (with the exception of tribes).

- **Phase 1** involved implementation of the system in 2000 by the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare in Milwaukee (BMCW) and by the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Phase 1 was completed in December 2000.
- **Phase 2** involved statewide expansion and began in 2001. Counties implemented the system starting in October 2001 generally in groups of 10 to 12 counties every four months for the statewide rollout. The last group of 14 counties implements the system in June 2004.
- **Phase 3** started in 2002 and involves converting WiSACWIS from a traditional client server-based application to Internet Web technology to reduce operational support and maintenance costs. The conversion to “eWiSACWIS” was completed in December 2003. Counties implementing the system in 2004 are implementing the new Internet version.

With the statewide implementation of the system at hand, Wisconsin is beginning the process to obtain federal certification of the WiSACWIS system as meeting all SACWIS requirements. The initial federal certification review will take place in September 2004. Based on the experience of other states, obtaining final federal certification will likely be a multi-year process.

WiSACWIS is designed to provide statewide data on child abuse and neglect investigations for the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and statewide data on children in the out-of-home care and adoption programs for Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS) reporting purposes. During the transition period, as counties have come up on WiSACWIS, state data have come from the combination of WiSACWIS and legacy systems.

The legacy systems include the Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) data system for child abuse and neglect reports and the Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) for information on children in foster care, payments to foster care providers, and adoptions, and the Kinship Care Data Tracking System for information on children receiving Kinship care payments.

For NCANDS reporting, the CAN system is currently used to submit summary state data for the NCANDS Summary Data Component (SDC) format. WiSACWIS data are loaded into the CAN system to produce the SDC report. Development is currently underway in WiSACWIS to create the Child File for submitting case-specific data along with the Agency file to provide additional NCANDS information. The CAN system will be used to provide the SDC report for FFY 2004 while the new Child and Agency Files are being tested. Wisconsin will submit the Child and Agency files instead of the SDC summary report beginning in FFY 2005

The HSRS system has historically been used to submit state foster care and adoption data to the federal AFCARS data system. The HSRS Child Substitute Care (CSC) module is used to collect out-of-home care information and the HSRS Adoption module is used for reporting finalized adoptions. The WiSACWIS foster care file was developed in 2003 and is used for counties reporting out-of-home care cases in WiSACWIS. During the transition period, WiSACWIS and HSRS out-of-home information have been integrated into a single "blended" AFCARS foster care file. As counties have implemented WiSACWIS, the WiSACWIS share of the blended AFCARS foster file has grown as use of the HSRS CSC module is phased out. With the last group of counties implementing WiSACWIS in June 2004, the AFCARS FFY 2004 "B" file for the period ending September 30, 2004 will be the first AFCARS foster care file with 100% WiSACWIS data. Wisconsin will begin encrypting AFCARS foster care files from that point forward, which will improve federal capacity to match AFCARS files from different time periods.

For adoption AFCARS reporting, Wisconsin is planning the development of the WiSACWIS adoption file. Development will begin in 2004 with the goal of using WiSACWIS data for adoption AFCARS reporting beginning in FFY 2005. Until that point, adoption AFCARS data will continue to be generated from the HSRS adoption module. SNAP program staff collect information for the HSRS adoption reporting based on adoption cases managed in WiSACWIS.

Under the Chafee Act, states are required to collect outcome information for youth who age out of the out-of-home care system. Wisconsin is waiting on federal direction on the specific outcome measures before building data collection mechanisms. It is anticipated that the Chafee outcome data collection will be implemented through enhancements to the WiSACWIS system.

## **B. Research and Evaluation**

The DCFS publishes several types of child welfare statistical information. The DCFS publishes an annual report on child abuse and neglect (CAN) statistics for the state, including the number and type of maltreatment reports and the disposition of those reports. The DCFS produces periodic out-of-home care (OOHC) reports using out-of-home care information. The last OOHC report analyzing data through 1999 was published in October 2001. Additional OOHC reports will be produced once out-of-home care data for all counties can be obtained from WiSACWIS.

The BMCW has a Program Evaluation and Management (PEM) unit that produces monthly data reports on child welfare services in Milwaukee. These monthly data reports are shared widely



within the Milwaukee community. On a semi-annual basis, a comprehensive report on BMCW achievement of lawsuit settlement performance objectives is produced and shared with the Milwaukee community.

Within DCFS, the Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning leads efforts to develop data sources and analyze program outcomes to improve the quality of child welfare services in the state. The Office develops program outcome reports for counties using CAN, HSRS, WiSACWIS, and other data patterned after the federal child welfare outcomes report. Additional reports for county use will be produced as part of the quality assurance initiative in the Wisconsin PEP.

The DCFS is currently contracting with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to conduct a third party evaluation of child welfare services provided by the BMCW in Milwaukee County. The evaluation includes both in-home and out-of-home care services. The project has produced reports on in-home safety services in 2003 and recent entries to out-of-home care in 2004. A third report on another group of children who have been in out-of-home care for an extended period is currently underway. The final evaluation report will be completed in 2005.

DCFS currently contracts with the University of Chicago-Chapin Hall to participate in a 3-state study with Illinois and Iowa to evaluate Independent Living outcomes for youth who aged out of out-of-home care. Outcome areas that will be examined include employment, education, housing, and various lifestyle issues (parenting, substance abuse, victimization, etc.). The study will also compile information regarding services and supports the youths received. Cases were selected for the evaluation starting in April 2002 and the first wave of interviews with youth were completed in 2003. An interim report on the first wave of interviews has been completed. The second wave of interviews with the sampled youth is being conducted in 2004. The final wave of interviews will be conducted prior to the youth turning 21. Wisconsin anticipates using the study results to meet expected federal Chafee program reporting requirements on a sample basis until more complete data collection mechanisms can be developed.

### C. Judicial and Administrative Panel Review System

Wisconsin has a comprehensive judicial and administrative panel review system in place to review the permanence goals and case and permanency plans for children in out-of-home care and to ensure compliance with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Key aspects of child welfare case planning and review include the following factors:

- Development and implementation of service and progress evaluation plans with families and key collateral contacts with the family system; and,
- Use of the case and permanency plans and results of subsequent progress evaluations as a bases for conducting permanency plan reviews, assessing ASFA considerations and requirements, and modifying the permanence goal, as necessary, including the development of a concurrent permanence goal.

Practice responsibilities and relevant parties associated with the above factors are governed by a variety of policy directives, including state statutes, administrative rules, program policies, standards, guidelines, and operating procedures. Current state statutes governing child welfare intervention address permanency plan review requirements, timeframes, plan content, and notice procedures, including notice to out-of-home care providers, and are consistent with expectations prescribed under ASFA.

The issuance of the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 provides a uniform system to assure that all county child welfare caseworkers conduct timely family assessments, develop case plans, and conduct case reviews for all children and families who enter the system. Coupled with the previously issued *CPS Investigation Standards*, the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* are designed to cover the life of a case from the time that a child abuse or neglect report is received through the closing of the ongoing services case.

The DCFS has implemented several approaches to informing, clarifying, and monitoring permanency planning review requirements and assessing ongoing ASFA compliance. These approaches include development or modification and implementation of standards and guidelines for practice and operating procedures, provision of training and technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring and program improvement responsibilities.

To further clarify ASFA requirements previously codified into Wisconsin statutes, DCFS proposed legislative changes in the 2003-04 legislative session. Unfortunately, the legislative session ended before the changes could be enacted. DCFS will again introduce those changes when the Legislature returns in January of 2005. Several standard court forms were revised in September 2002 to reflect these statutory changes and DCFS is continuing to fine-tune those forms as modifications are made to policies and statutes.

#### *Modification of Administrative Rules, Standards, Policies, and Operating Procedures*

The ability to comply with ASFA requirements not only requires tracking the length of a child's placement in out-of-home care, but also implementing practice standards and guidelines, policies, and procedures, and program coordination which support effective child welfare intervention. Such efforts focus on successfully engaging the child and his or her family,

involving them in the development of a unique and responsive case plan, and evaluating progress in a thorough and regular manner, involving the family, providers, and key collateral contacts in this process.

Finally, DCFS continues to work with representatives of the Director of State Courts Office, the Milwaukee County Children's Court, and other key legal stakeholders in supporting continued cross-system coordination in the state's permanency planning review responsibilities and compliance with the ASFA. Efforts have focused on the identification and development of strategies to address the availability of resources within and philosophical differences among members of Wisconsin's county judiciary regarding the implementation of the ASFA requirements.

#### D. Quality Assurance

##### *Quality Assurance Staffing*

Several program units throughout the DCFS and the DHFS carry out quality assurance efforts directed at the state's child welfare program in both the BMCW and in county agencies across the state. These program units include the following:

- *Department Area Administration Regional Staff* – These staff review local child welfare programs, including monitoring program performance, conducting on-site reviews, and responding to client and public complaints about local program services.
- *BMCW Program Evaluation Managers (PEMs)* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the BMCW child welfare program, including safety, case management, adoption, and licensing services. The staff monitor agency performance and conduct regular on-site reviews.
- *BPP Adoption Quality Assurance Specialists* – These staff review the program performance of contracted service providers in the Special Needs Adoption Program. The BPP is in the process of hiring staff to monitor agency performance and conduct on-site reviews.
- *BPP Child Welfare Policy Section* - These policy staff provide policy expertise for program monitoring and agency review activities.
- *DCFS Office of Policy Evaluation and Planning* - The office coordinates quality assurance activities with the different units, including implementing quality assurance strategies and using program outcome data for program monitoring and contract management purposes.
- *OSF Program Evaluation and Audit Section* – These staff perform in-depth program and fiscal audits of agencies receiving funds from the Department. DCFS uses this unit as needed to ensure accountability of agencies for child welfare funds.

In response to the August 2003 CFSR, the DCFS produced a program enhancement plan that includes the design and implementation of a comprehensive statewide Quality Assurance System. The purpose of the Quality Assurance System is to identify strengths and problem areas and then provide needed technical assistance and support to enhance Wisconsin's child welfare program.

An RFP is under development to contract for five Quality Service Review Specialists (QSR) that will be responsible for leading on-site case, program, and agency reviews as part of the Department's systemic child welfare quality assurance plan. The reviews will be coordinated with Area Administration teams and conducted in partnership with county and tribal agencies. The QSR Specialists will also participate in the development of strategies and identification of support services that will assist the agency in improving performance.

A state-employed Quality Services Review Manager will be hired in 2004 to provide oversight, analysis, and program planning for the provision of statewide quality child welfare services and the child welfare quality assurance plan. This position will supervise and coordinate the activities of the five QSR specialists. A paraprofessional Quality Service Review Coordinator will also be hired to coordinate county agency review logistics, manage quality enhancement data from case reviews, and assist in the production of review reports for county agencies.

### *Adoption Program Quality Assurance*

The quality assurance component of the Adoption Program was implemented in October of 2001 with the hiring of four (4) adoption QA staff for the purpose of supporting strategies to improve special needs adoption services and track outcomes. The first six months was spent on training and establishing the criteria for doing QA focused on quality improvement. In 2002, the QA staff began doing the annual satisfaction survey and developing a quality assurance tool for monitoring adoption cases assigned to contract partner agencies to determine agency eligibility for a performance payment and to measure outcomes. The QA tool, along with personal and telephone interviews and surveys, is used for on-site reviews of cases.

The adoption QA staff also review cases for compliance with the Adoption Standards of Practice. Examples of activities that are analyzed include: methods of handling complaints by foster and adoptive parents; how case plans are developed to meet the permanence needs of the child; preparation of the child for adoption to successfully transition to adopted status; and training of prospective adoptive parents regarding issues with special needs children in order to ensure that parents are knowledgeable of issues affecting adoptive children, thereby reducing the likelihood of a failed adoption.

The QA staff do regular reports on the private agencies, develop the annual adoption report required by statute, provide quality oversight of the Adoption Program, provide or arrange for training, and follow up on WiSACWIS data entry issues claiming clean-up, develop a monthly newsletter for all adoption staff to ensure continuity of adoption service throughout the state, and other tasks as assigned. In our next biennial budget, DCFS will make these positions permanent within the Adoption Program.

### *Ongoing Monitoring and Program Improvement*

The DCFS continues to implement ongoing efforts to assess the quality of child welfare services, to identify what is needed to support service quality, and to develop strategies to respond to those needs, including the requirements associated with permanency planning reviews and compliance with the ASFA.

As part of its ongoing quality assurance efforts, the DCFS has increased its efforts to support and utilize the information available from its data sources and developed new data collection tools to better understand the status of child welfare service delivery across the state. As a result of data collection, analysis, and reporting for the BMCW, DCFS has achieved increased capacity to use data for program monitoring. This capacity is increasing through the statewide implementation of the WiSACWIS. County agencies are provided with reports on program activity and will be provided with additional reports once all counties have converted to WiSACWIS.

## E. Training and Technical Assistance

### *Staff Training*

Training is provided to local agency staff primarily through Training Partnerships formed by county and tribal agencies with several campuses of the University of Wisconsin system. The state is divided into four training regions: the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Partnership with the UW-Green Bay; the Western Partnership with UW-River Falls; the Southern Partnership with the UW-Madison; and the Milwaukee Partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. DCFS works with the Training Partnerships to provide a statewide system of training for child welfare workers on the foundations of practice and advanced skilled training on specialized topics. All counties, BMCW, SNAP, and most tribes are members of the Training Partnerships.

Training activities are coordinated using a State Training Council that reviews training activities and provides direction to the Training Partnerships. The Training Partnerships have local steering committees with representation from county and tribal child welfare agencies. The Training Partnerships work closely with child welfare managers to encourage counties to have more staff complete the core training. In 2002, the Training Council developed a comprehensive strategic plan for the training system that is being used to guide further development of the Training Partnership system.

The Training Partnerships are involved in supporting counties to provide training to foster parents and prospective adoptive parents using a state-approved competency based curriculum. Foster and adoptive parent training is discussed in detail under the foster and adoptive parent recruitment section of the plan.

### *Training Curriculum*

The Wisconsin training curriculum for child welfare staff is a competency-based approach designed to reinforce the basic principles of good case practice and to develop specialized knowledge and skills. A foundation of “Core” courses is offered statewide and all caseworkers are expected to complete the Core. Regular offerings of “specialized” training on advanced practice skills and “related” training on topics important to casework provide opportunities for ongoing training. DCFS will be working with the Training Partnerships, counties, and tribes to develop a comprehensive pre-service training curriculum.

DCFS and the Training Partnerships continue to update the standard training curricula to better educate child welfare staff regarding state and federal program requirements and child welfare practice to instill the competencies needed by staff to support child safety, permanence, and well being. Specialized training on new program initiatives is provided through the Training Partnerships to the extent possible and all training activities are coordinated with the Training Partnerships. In Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Training Partnership also operates the staff development program under contract, providing training to BMCW staff on program requirements and BMCW operating procedures.

### *Foster Care Provider Training*

The training program for foster and adoptive parents is described under Section IV of the plan on page 22. DCFS is committed to the expansion of pre-service and ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents. The new foster care resource center will provide statewide support for training efforts.

DCFS contracts with the University of Milwaukee Youth Work Learning Center to provide training to staff caring for children in group homes and residential care centers. For treatment foster care, DCFS administrative rule requires that the treatment foster care agencies provide training to treatment foster parents.

### *Other Training and Technical Assistance*

DCFS supports academic degree programs using Title IV-E funds on a pass-through basis. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Green Bay (jointly with UW-Oshkosh) operate Masters of Social Work (MSW) student stipend programs. UW-Green Bay also has a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) stipend program.

Beginning in 2003, DCFS, through the Training Council, has been working with tribes to develop a "Tribal Training Partnership" to provide training and technical assistance to tribal child welfare staff to address specific needs related to tribal child welfare programs. DCFS is committed to supporting the development of the Tribal Training Partnership and will provide funding for a tribal training manager position.

The Division conducts other types of technical assistance and program education activities, including hosting an annual child welfare conference for local agency administrators and managers and periodic program roundtable meetings on child welfare program topics. Through the regional offices, the Department provides ongoing technical assistance to counties and tribes regarding child welfare program knowledge, skills, and program requirements.

### *IV-E Funding for Training*

DCFS provides financial support to the Training Partnerships primarily by passing through Title IV-E training funds based on match generated by the universities and the member agencies. The member county and tribal agencies provide cash contributions to the Training Partnerships. DCFS works with the universities to define procedures for counting member agency expenses as match. DCFS has also established detailed fiscal reporting to ensure documentation of match expenses.

Specific training projects are also funded by DCFS using other federal funding sources such as Title IV-B and CAPTA. The Training Partnerships receive CAPTA funds for training related to child protective service assessments and the Training Partnerships also use university resources and member agency contributions to support training that is not IV-E reimbursable.

DCFS has issued a comprehensive IV-E training fiscal guide based on federal law, regulations, and audit findings to provide guidance to all grantees receiving IV-E funds. The fiscal guide

describes in detail the types of expenses eligible for IV-E reimbursement at the enhanced training rate and the obligations of universities receiving IV-E funds.

### *Enhancing Training*

In the Wisconsin CFSR results, initial staff training, ongoing staff training, and foster/adoptive parent training were cited as areas needing improvement. In the Wisconsin PEP, DCFS has committed to establishing statewide requirements for initial and ongoing staff training, and ensuring that all foster/adoptive parents complete the existing competency based pre-service training and receive ongoing training.

Additional funds will be provided to the Training Partnerships to establish a statewide program of initial or pre-service training for child welfare staff and to expand ongoing training to ensure that all staff receive foundation or Core training and ongoing training.

DCFS will also establish a WiSACWIS training program that will provide ongoing systems training to county, BMCW, and, potentially, tribal users of the system. The WiSACWIS training will be coordinated with the practice and specialized training sessions delivered by the Training Partnerships. In addition, DCFS is establishing a statewide foster care resource center that will provide statewide coordination of foster and adoptive parent training.

### F. Service Array

The availability, applicability, and accessibility of key service interventions are critical to helping families maintain or achieve safe home environments and to assure timely permanence for children who require temporary or permanent placement outside of their homes. As part of Wisconsin's child welfare program, county agencies, tribes, and the BMCW assure the availability of services through a variety of sources.

On behalf of the BMCW, the vendor agencies provide in-home safety services to families and ongoing case management services to families with children placed in out-of-home care. The vendor agencies create specialized service networks with community service providers, through either subcontract, memoranda of understanding, or information and referral. These service networks include specific resources designed to meet the individualized needs of families based on the families' current case plan or progress evaluation. The BMCW has specified a standard list of services that must be available to all families based on their service needs.

Similarly, in the balance of the state, county and tribal agencies receive funds from the Department to support the delivery of prevention, early intervention, and ongoing assistance needed to assure child safety and permanence. Funds directed toward these services are provided through the Community Aids and Youth Aids programs, PSSF program, IV-E Incentive Funds program, and other state and local funding mechanisms. These services are available statewide, although counties have developed individualized service strategies based on the needs of their population and the availability of service providers. The DCFS gives counties and tribes considerable flexibility with local service strategies.

The DCFS uses a program planning process that requires local agencies to solicit community and program participant input into establishing service priorities and service strategies. Through



local PSSF program planning committees or other coordination mechanisms, local agencies have established collaborative planning structures to obtain input into local program planning.

In conjunction with the Division of Disability and Elder Services, the DCFS has developed the Coordinated Services Team Initiative. Based on fundamental core values and a strength-based approach to service provision, child welfare, substance abuse, and mental health agencies will work together across systems utilizing a single coordinated case plan in an effort to provide comprehensive services and supports to children and families. This initiative is aimed at systems change; therefore, it is a time-limited infusion of resources designed to assist counties in changing their service delivery systems. The two Divisions will provide technical assistance and funding to counties in an effort to enhance collaboration, advocacy, and case planning with families involved in multiple systems.

The DCFS issued the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* in May 2002 and is developing Out-of-Home Care Placement Standards and Ch. HFS 44 to provide direction to local agencies in the development of service plans and performing ongoing case management. These standards and guidelines require that service needs be identified in case plans and that recommended services meet the unique needs of the particular family involved.

#### G. Agency Responsiveness to Community

The DCFS engages in ongoing consultation with local agencies, tribes, and key representatives of agencies or service systems that interface with the child welfare system. Ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among the state child welfare program, its funding sources, and its key stakeholders (e.g., foster and adoptive parents, tribes, court systems, service providers, and consumers) are critical to protecting the safety of children, achieving permanency, and promoting the well-being of families. The DCFS continues to work with key stakeholder groups to improve communication and coordination. The input of stakeholders is actively sought by the DCFS and the input is used in the DCFS strategic planning process.

The DCFS regularly works with groups representing key constituencies in the child welfare system to identify and resolve issues. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Wisconsin Foster/Adoptive Parent Association, the Wisconsin County Human Services Association, the 11 Indian Tribes in Wisconsin, the Office of the Director of State Courts, elected officials at the state and local levels, and other associations.

The DCFS staff regularly meet with local agencies and service providers to discuss child welfare issues and identify ways to improve services and state-level support of the service delivery system. State staff participate in regional meetings of local child welfare and juvenile justice program managers.

In Milwaukee, a Partnership Council consisting of representatives from state and local government, the courts, service providers, and other key stakeholders meets regularly to discuss Milwaukee child welfare program issues. The BMCW provides the Partnership Council with regular reports on program activity in Milwaukee.

A state-level Executive Steering Committee (ESC) comprised of key state-level stakeholders has met on a quarterly basis since May of 2001 to consider the results of the local assessment process

and advise the DCFS on how to improve child welfare program performance. Members of the ESC have analyzed a number of issues affecting the Wisconsin child welfare system. The results of the ESC analysis were used by the DCFS in completing its Statewide Assessment in June 2003 for the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR).

In addition to the ESC, in September 2003, the established the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) Core Team, which served as the principal architect of the plan to respond to outcomes and performance levels that fell below the threshold for substantial conformance in the CFSR. The team was composed of representatives from counties, tribes, State Court Improvement Project staff, Child Welfare Training Partnerships, University of Wisconsin System, other state agencies, and advocacy groups. The Program Enhancement Plan was created through a collaborative process that occurred over a period of 7 months.

To sustain the child welfare planning partnership with counties, tribes, and other stakeholders through the implementation of the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan, five-year Children and Family Services Plan, and the larger five-year Child Welfare Plan, the PEP Core Team and the ESC will be blended into one body and new members will be added to represent the broader constituencies in child welfare. It is envisioned that this team will be composed of about 60 individuals representing counties, tribes, other state agencies, consumers, advocacy organizations, and other child welfare professionals who will work together to help ensure that the needed actions and strategies to improve the child welfare outcomes are implemented. The Child Welfare Program Enhancement Team will:

- Guide the implementation of the plans.
- Ensure the input of staff, peers, consumers, community leaders, and others in the implementation process.
- Provide expertise and advice on resolution of competing issues and other problems as they arise.
- Strengthen and advance the interdisciplinary response to improving the safety, permanence, and well being of children.

Focus Committees on policy, training, quality assurance, service array, and foster care and adoption will design details of the implementation and will be composed of professionals in child protection, mental health, domestic violence, foster parenting, adoption, health care, law enforcement, the courts, alcohol and drug abuse, and other related fields. They will actively involve consumers and other stakeholders in shaping the policies, procedures, practices, and services that comprise the PEP, CFSP, and the Wisconsin five-year plan. They will make recommendations to the DCFS and will consult with the Implementation Team as issues arise that would be best shaped by a larger discussion.

The DCFS continues to support coordination between local child welfare agencies and local PSSF program planning committees. Collaborative efforts have included joint training, involvement in local assessments, and implementation of a combined, multi-year planning process.

## H. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention Efforts

The availability and quality of licensed out-of-home care placement providers in Wisconsin is supported by a variety of laws, administrative rules, and policies. Regulatory policies are developed by the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP) and the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing (BRL), with the BPP developing standards for licensing foster homes and treatment foster homes and the BRL developing and enforcing standards for other types of child welfare agencies. In addition, the DCFS makes focused efforts associated with recruitment, training, and retention. The regulatory aspects of ensuring the safety of children and the quality of providers are driven by state statute and administrative rules as follows:

- Wisconsin's Children's Code, Chapter 48
  1. Placement Authorization
  2. Criminal Background Check Requirements
  3. Independent Investigations of Maltreatment Allegations Against Licensed Providers
  4. Notice to Foster Parents and Other Physical Custodians of Legal Proceedings
- Administrative Rules for Health and Family Services (HFS)
  1. HFS 12 - Caregiver Background Checks
  2. HFS 37 - Information To Be Provided to Foster Parents
  3. HFS 38 - Treatment Foster Care for Children
  4. HFS 50 – Facilitating the Adoption of Children with Special Needs
  5. HFS 51 – Adoption of Children with Special Needs
  6. HFS 52 - Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth
  7. HFS 54 - Child Placing Agencies
  8. HFS 56 - Foster Home Care for Children
  9. HFS 57 - Group Foster Care for Children
  10. HFS 58 – Eligibility for the Kinship Care and Long-Term Kinship Care Program
  11. HFS 59 – Shelter Care Facilities
  12. HFS 94 – Patient Rights and Resolution of Patient Grievances

The BMCW, state Adoption Program, county and tribal human/social services agencies, and private child welfare agencies work together to ensure the availability of and access to foster and adoptive placement resources. These efforts include cross-jurisdictional access to placement resources. State, local, and private agencies also engage in joint recruitment efforts to match placement resources, both foster and adoptive, to the needs of children entering out-of-home care or who are in need of an adoptive placement.

The DCFS continues to support comprehensive statewide recruitment efforts to attract more individuals to be foster or adoptive parents and has an annual recruitment budget. The DCFS recruitment plan assures that the concepts of foster care and adoption are made more visible within all of the communities in the state. A multi-media approach is used to increase awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents. The DCFS established a toll-free telephone line for interested individuals to call to request further information. Every call received is referred to the appropriate county child welfare agency for follow-up with the caller.

Special recruitment tools have been developed for use by the state Adoption Program and county foster care coordinators to train, recruit, and retain foster and adoptive families. In Wisconsin,

over 85% of the special needs adoptions are foster home conversions. Because of this high percentage, the DCFS has committed to working with counties to recruit quality foster/adoptive resources. While funds for recruitment are limited, the DCFS has found that more can be accomplished by coordinating and pooling recruitment efforts with counties to best accomplish our mutual needs. The DCFS has been successful, through our private partners in the Adoption Program, to access their private resources to further expand the pool of foster/adoptive resources.

In December 2002, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan devoted their winter newsletter to special needs adoption. This newsletter is sent to over 9,000 recipients, including their adoptive families, foundations, member organizations, and churches throughout Wisconsin. In addition, they include special needs adoption and foster care in all of their informational meetings for adoptive families. This was done at no cost to the State of Wisconsin.

The DCFS is looking at other mechanisms to recruit quality families. Paying families for quality adoptive referrals, targeted recruitment, working with faith-based community organizations, and reaching out to national organizations to help sponsor recruitment efforts is in process.

Foster/adopt families stay involved in the program if they are satisfied; to be satisfied, they must be supported and trained. In CY 2002, the DCFS partnered with the Western Wisconsin UW Training Partnership and counties for implementation of the Partners in Alternative Care Education, or P.A.C.E., pre-service training for foster/adopt families. P.A.C.E. is a variation of the Institute for Human Services training and presents a variety of topics foster parents should know and understand when working with foster children. This training has been very positively received and generated a lot of excitement among the foster/adoptive families. Over 25 counties have applied for state pass-through funding to support pre-service training.

In addition, the DCFS has been working with AdoptUSKids to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families. In response to the upcoming public service advertisements from AdoptUSKids, the DCFS, Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, and counties across the state are planning ways to respond quickly and effectively to inquiries from people who are interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents. In this process, counties and adoption agencies are identifying resource families to function as mentor families and provide prospective foster or adoptive parents with information about their experiences in foster care and adoption.

In April 2004, representatives from foster care and adoption, including foster and adoptive parents, gathered for two days of consultation with Judy and John McKenzie from AdoptUSKids. The purpose of the meeting was to work on a benchmarking initiative to increase recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families in Wisconsin. State level staff and regional groups that included foster and adoptive parents, foster care coordinators, contract partner adoption agencies, and tribal representatives identified areas to target to increase recruitment and response to families in the foster care and adoption systems.

One method the DCFS is proposing to support foster and adoptive families and foster care coordinators is the creation of a Foster Care Resource Center. In mid-May 2004, foster parents, adoptive parents, foster care coordinators, adoption staff, tribal representatives, and state staff gathered to discuss and identify services that would support all members of the foster care and adoption systems. This collaborative process will result in the contracting for a Resource Center

to support the work of local agencies, the efforts of foster and adoptive parents, and the recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families across Wisconsin.

## **VIII. CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN 2005-2009**

### **Overview**

The Department will continue to develop and implement program standards for safety, permanence, and well being of children and the overall improvement of the child welfare system. The standards implement provisions under federal law, including the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and the Child Abuse Protection and Treatment Act (CAPTA), and improvement strategies included in the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP).

The following section of the plan describes specific activities planned for Title IV-B, Adoption, CAPTA, Chafee, and Tribal Child Welfare during the period of 2005 - 2009. Activities implemented in the next year will be done with FFY 2005 funds. Proposed budgets for FFY 2005 are attached to the plan.

### **Title IV-B Subpart I - Child Welfare Services**

#### *Community Aids Program*

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Community Aids Program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipated in program policy for how Community Aids funds can be used for child welfare services.

#### *Youth Aids Program*

The amount of IV-B Subpart I funds included in the Youth Aids program will remain about the same as previous years. No changes are anticipate in program policy for how Youth Aids funds can be used for juvenile justice services.

#### *Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Programs*

DHFS will work with the Wisconsin Association for Homeless and Runaway Services (WAHRS) to develop guidelines to assist programs in developing good working relationships with their individual county and law enforcement agencies, and develop policies regarding issues of confidentiality, mutual delivery of service, and information sharing with their local county human service departments. Runaway programs will continue to develop an array of services to strengthen families and improve their ability to parent and provide a safe environment for their children. These services will include crisis counseling, family mediation, family counseling, and parenting classes. These services will support families that currently are not in contact with child protective services, and strengthen families that may be at-risk of intervention by CPS.

Planned Activities: Over the next 5 years, Runaway Programs will continue to strengthen families, prevent family dissolution, promote self-sufficiency, and assure permanent and stable homes for youth.

- Provide over 2,000 families with counseling annually
- Annually serve over 3,300 youth face-to-face
- Provide temporary shelter for approximately 3,600 youth annually

- Provide crisis counseling to over 15,000 youth annually
- Reunite over 95% of youth served by the Runaway Program will be reunited with their families or placed in a mutually agreed upon living situation.

## **IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families**

### *Local PSSF Program Operations*

The DCFS has refined the plan format used by counties to develop their three-year plans. In developing plans, counties will utilize both individual and community outcomes. It is expected that counties will use the results to make important programming decisions. The new format will include federal outcomes used for the CFSR process and data will be provided by the DCFS for each county. Individual programs will be required to identify individual outcomes and counties will submit reports which include those results. The new format will focus on ease of use and the ability to better utilize outcome results to determine efficacy of programs. This new format will be used for counties to write their 2005-2007 PSSF plans.

The Wisconsin federal Subpart II grant award for FFY 2004 was larger than expected due to the discretionary appropriation at the federal level and increased Food Stamp utilization in the state for children, which is used to determine state allocations. For the portion of the additional funds related to Family Support, Preservation, and Reunification, the DCFS will allocate additional funds to counties. The DCFS is using a new allocation formula that provides for greater equity and, in particular, provides much needed additional funds to smaller, rural counties. As part of the local 2005-2007 plans, the DCFS will require counties to tie the use of new PSSF monies to program enhancements identified in the Wisconsin PEP.

### *Other Program Initiatives*

The DCFS will continue to promote and support collaborative efforts such as the Coordinated Service Teams. While supporting efforts that deal with short-term crisis issues for at-risk families, it is vital that chronic, long-term issues impairing efforts to become strong and healthy families are also addressed. In addition, a new pilot program involving the collaboration of BPP, other Divisions within the Department, and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections is being developed to provide case management and wrap-around services in order to safely reunite female offenders with their children. Goals of the program are closely tied to objectives identified in Wisconsin's PEP, and will include service components that address issues important to successful reunification such as: permanency, access to physical and emotional healthcare, AODA resources, on-going family assessment, safety planning, collaboration/advocacy with the child's educational system, etc. All services are being designed for accessibility to both parents and children.

The DCFS will further its fatherhood initiative by working with counties to identify and remove policies and practices that may be barriers to fathers and other non-custodial parents participating in child welfare cases and create services/programs that are father-friendly. In addition, in response to one of the strategies identified in Wisconsin's PEP, PSSF funds will be used to assist in enhancing Wisconsin's efforts to identify, locate, and involve fathers and paternal relatives in an effort to better meet the needs of children in the child welfare system.

The DCFS will continue to work with counties and tribes to strengthen collaborative efforts at the local level to improve and enhance services to children and families. In response to one of the items in Wisconsin's PEP, we will be using some of Wisconsin's PSSF funding to add a Tribal Services Training Coordinator. This will be a state position that will assess the need for training and technical assistance among county and tribal workers in the areas of Indian Tribal Welfare, cultural issues, and federal and state requirements.

The DCFS will work with local PSSF lead agencies to identify the level of current programs and services designed to improve relationship skills/strengthen marriages.

Starting in 2004, PSSF funds will be used for technical assistance to agencies operating Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (POCAN) programs that provide training to paraprofessionals to be "home visitors" and provide parenting training/education of new parents. This is a prevention program intended to reduce child abuse and neglect. A recent evaluation of the POCAN program by the Department has shown it to be effective.

### ***Use of Subpart 2 Funds for PSSF Services***

Of the total Subpart 2 funds, 20% is used by the DCFS for state-level adoption promotion and support services activities. A small amount, approximately 5%, is used by the DCFS for state operations, including training and technical assistance to counties and tribes. Slightly more than 5% will be used to fund three statewide programs. The remaining 70% of the Subpart 2 funds are allocated to counties and tribes to fund support, preservation, and reunification programs and for three statewide service enhancement programs. Local agencies are required to apply the federal funding requirements for preservation, support, and reunification services to meet the Subpart 2 spending requirements for those service areas. The PSSF program allocations to counties and tribes are also supplemented with an additional \$300,000 from other funds, including Drug Free Schools funds.

For the adoption promotion and support services portion of the Subpart 2 program, the PSSF funds are directed toward promoting and supporting adoption as a permanency outcome for children. For information about the adoption portion of PSSF funds, please see the adoption section of this plan.

A FFY 2005 budget request for IV-B Subpart 2 funds is included in the plan. The FFY 2005 plan assumes continuation of the FFY 2004 funding level.

### ***State Matching Funds for Subpart 2***

The PSSF funds for all categories, except adoption, are allocated to counties on a calendar year basis and tribes on a federal fiscal year basis. Under state policy for the PSSF program, local agencies are required to spend the required minimum amounts for preservation, support, and reunification. Local agencies are also required to use the other services amount on preservation, support, or reunification activities. Wisconsin does not currently operate any projects in the "other" services category. The DCFS uses the adoption amount at the state level as part of the overall financing for adoption program activities.



The required state match for the PSSF program is generated by county agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids program or local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditure information reported to the DCFS. The estimated match amounts shown in the CFS-101 form attached to the plan reflect the estimated minimum match expenditures for each of the PSSF categories. Actual match expenditures will typically exceed the minimum amounts, particularly for family preservation activities.

## **Adoption Program**

Increasing the numbers of minority and special needs adoptions and increasing the timeliness of adoption finalizations has been a priority for the Special Needs Adoption Program (SNAP). Over the past 5 years, Wisconsin child welfare agencies have doubled the number of finalized special needs adoptions. Calendar Year 2003 was a record year again for adoptions in Wisconsin for total number of adoptions (1,155) and the number of children over the age of nine (425) who were adopted.

The Adoption Program develops an annual report to the Legislature regarding the previous year's services and costs. A copy of the 2003 report is attached. Even with the movement to 100% contracting for adoption services, the state has not seen an increase in cost. The private agencies have demonstrated their ability to develop the capacity to handle all the assigned cases and continue to move the children to permanence in a timely and efficient manner.

Wisconsin was found to be in substantial conformance in the CFSR with regard to adoption recruitment. The DCFS has been able to maintain a pool of available foster and adoptive resources basically through word-of-mouth. Wisconsin also enjoys an 85% foster home conversion rate. This puts requirements on the state and counties to recruit more quality foster homes. Our major barrier to adoption has been getting the children eligible for adoption through TPR. Although the DCFS has seen a steady increase in adoptions over the past five years, a decrease in special needs adoption is anticipated over the next few years because the number of children in out-of-home care is decreasing.

In 2004, the DCFS will focus more attention on assigning potential adoptive cases earlier in the out-of-home experience so that children can move to permanence within the ASFA timeline of 24 months for a minimum of 32% of foster home conversions. The Adoption Program needs to continue to put further emphasis on assigning cases earlier so that children can get to permanence sooner.

To help in this process, the DCFS developed a Permanency Consultation Timeline (copy attached) to aid counties and the state permanency consultant's plan for child permanence without unnecessary delays or barriers. Staff from counties, the state, and private agencies were involved in developing this timeline, which was then updated with recommendations from the CFSR program enhancement planning process to reflect best practice.

The State Permanency Consultant (SPC) role is also in the process of implementation with the remaining state adoption workers. This position requires working with counties, tribes, and private agencies to identify the most appropriate form of permanence for all children in out-of-home care. The SPC is an active participant in this process and assists the county, tribe, or

private agency in ensuring that the necessary steps to achieve permanence are taken. In some cases, this may require the SPC to assist in carrying out some of the tasks.

Another initiative that is now in use in the placement process statewide is the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) form. This tool was developed by the QA staff (copy attached) and helps ensure that a variety of resources, particularly relatives, are considered in making placement decisions and that the most appropriate resource for the child is chosen based on identified criteria. The SPC will track information on MEPA and ICWA, as well as on international adoptions as required in the international adoption act (IAA).

The CFSR created an excellent opportunity for Wisconsin to look at the services the Adoption Program currently offers with an eye on those services that families have identified that they need. The DCFS is taking advantage of this opportunity to expand services to foster and adoptive families as identified in the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP). The challenge for Wisconsin will be to support these services when our adoption incentive funds disappear due to our inability to increase the number of adoptions.

Over the next 5 years, more emphasis will be placed on recruitment of families to meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis will be placed on targeted recruitment. The DCFS is currently working with AdoptUSKids as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. The DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the area of Indian family recruitment and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUSKids has been in Wisconsin two days already this year and the DCFS plans to have them back several more days during the year. While this was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, the DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

### ***Planned activities for 2005 - 2009***

- Development of a Foster Care Resource Center.
- Completion of the survey of families that have received post-adoption services to determine ways to better meet the needs of foster and adoptive families.
- Develop a comprehensive and sustained recruitment campaign that interfaces with the AdoptUSKids recruitment campaign.
- Partner with counties and tribes to more diligently search out paternal relatives and relatives in general for children in out-of-home care.
- Fully implement the Permanency Consultation timeline (attachment).
- Finalize changes in the state adoption caseworkers' role to that of State Permanency Consultant.
- Further develop the Adoption Quality Assurance role to address quality improvement in all adoption service areas.
- Decrease the time from removal to permanence for children in out-of-home care.

### ***IV-B Part II Funds***

The IV-B part 2 funds received by the Adoption Program are used to support the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and the private adoption contracts. There are currently 6 PARCs in operation providing information and referral services to all adoptive families, including domestic and international adoptions. The adoption contracts have made it possible to achieve the high

level of quality adoptions in the state and change the focus of the state adoption caseworker to that of state permanency consultant.

### *International Adoptions*

In Wisconsin, the DCFS has seen an increase in the number of disrupted international adoptions. Families are going to agencies outside Wisconsin to obtain placements of international children. Many of these agencies do not supply the family with complete information, convince families to take more children than they are approved to take, and do not provide post-placement services to help the child and family make the necessary adjustment.

The adoptive families are not familiar with the issues they will encounter and have no support from a licensed agency in some of these cases. It is currently up to the family to enter into another contract with a private agency for these services. Unfortunately, the family does not realize the need for these services and where to find the services, and by the time the family gets help, the relationship is so strained that the family decides to dissolve the relationship.

This is an area that the DCFS needs to track much more closely to identify treatment and program needs that can help families get past the tough times. Currently, the DCFS does not have the type of data necessary to make programmatic recommendations, but over the course of the next five years the DCFS will develop a database of information to assist in planning. During the CFSR review process, this was identified as an area of need by counties.

Adoption Program quality assurance staff have developed tools to track information on disrupted and dissolved international adoptions. New forms will be used to help track disruptions and dissolutions. The SPC staff will discuss these cases on a monthly basis with county staff to allow the DCFS to report more complete information concerning these children and families. The forms, showing the information DCFS will track for all of these cases, are attached.

The necessary information will be gathered by the State Permanency Consultants (SPC) and analyzed by the QA staff. With the SPCs in the counties on a regular basis, the DCFS will be able to get more accurate and timely information. The SPCs will carry a laptop computer with tracking forms so that information can be readily documented and shared.

### *Use of Adoption Incentive Funds*

Except for one year, the DCFS has received adoption incentive funds. Funds received have all been used to support the state adoption program's recruitment and finalization efforts as well as the adoption contract needs in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare.

The DCFS anticipates receiving adoption incentive funds for a fifth year, based on the record number of adoptions completed in FFY 2003. Because the number of children in out-of-home care is decreasing; it is foreseeable that there will be a corresponding decrease in the special needs adoption in the next few years. In light of this, the DCFS will focus the use of its incentive funds on initiatives that are designed to improve stability of placements and promote timely permanence for children. Listed below are examples of initiatives that center on the following objectives:

- Enhance support for foster/adoptive parents by increasing training, development and consultation, providing services such as respite and post adoption to enable them to deal with crises or attend training.
- Increase availability of and access to specialized treatment and therapeutic services to adoptive/foster families and children especially when MA or the county does not cover the services.
- Increase use of relatives as placement resources by paying for searches and other mechanisms to locate relatives of children in out-of-home care.
- Provide training and support to birthparents whose parental rights have been terminated or who are going through the TPR process to help them have closure or focus on the best interest of their children.

These services would be provided to support families during pre- and post-adoption finalization. They would also be available for domestic, special needs, and international adoptive families.

In recent years, more families have expressed their concerns to the DCFS about lack of support once the adoption is finalized. This same concern surfaced when families and professionals were interviewed during the CFSR.

The DCFS plans to continue its planning partnership with families, counties, tribes and other stakeholders in identifying specific initiatives that will have the most impact on program outcomes. The ability to continue those initiatives of past two years if the DCFS is unable to receive additional incentive funds will be a significant challenge.

Through a four-year ACF grant to Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, the DCFS is examining post-adoption services in Wisconsin from the perspective of the families and children. The information the DCFS receives will be extremely helpful in determining the most appropriate and effective array of post-adoption services. The DCFS will use this information to enhance the services it offers through the post-adoption resource centers (PARCs) and develop a Foster Care Resource Center that will be available to all families with children in out-of-home care or that have adopted.

#### *Wisconsin Foster Care Resource Center*

Wisconsin has a pressing need for a steady and stable resource of quality foster families for children, but currently has very limited resources dedicated to supporting and sustaining foster parents, adoptive parents, and County Foster Care Coordinators. Creation of the Wisconsin Foster Care Resource Center will:

- a) Help caseworkers recruit foster parents for children whose homes are no longer safe.
- b) Recognize the challenges of foster parenting and adoption and support parents in an effective way.
- c) Increase the visibility of foster care and adoption as options for families.

*Description:* The Wisconsin Foster Care Resource Center will support the work of child welfare professionals across the state. Caseworkers and Foster Care Coordinators will have access to training and support for their foster care recruitment and retention efforts where very little is currently available. For more effective and efficient foster and adoptive family recruitment, the Resource Center will develop successful, low-cost recruitment strategies that can be adapted to

most communities. It will offer forums for Foster Care Coordinators to communicate and exchange ideas with colleagues across the state and will offer techniques and training to improve success in working with and retaining quality foster and adoptive families.

The Resource Center will also provide necessary and useful information to prospective foster and adoptive parents including tools to prepare them for life as a foster or adoptive family and for nurturing children who have experienced abuse or neglect or other issues that prevent these children from living at home. It will connect foster and adoptive parents to support networks and resources for children.

*Approach:* Involve foster and adoptive parents, County and Tribal Foster Care Coordinators and private child-placing agencies in the development and operation of this centralized Resource Center. The DCFS will contract for the management and staffing of the Resource Center through a competitive DHFS process while the DCFS staff will provide active contract administration and leadership. In recognition of the continuum between foster care and adoption, the Resource Center will coordinate resources and training to benefit families and staff involved in both of these programs, though initial development and programming will focus on foster care.

#### Cross-Jurisdictional Resources

The DCFS is currently working with counties, tribes, and private agencies to remove jurisdictional barriers to the placement of children. Our planning is done jointly and is focused on how we can make the best placement decision for children in out-of-home care despite which agency may have developed the best possible resource.

Some specific strategies include:

- work closely with the AdoptUSKids national recruitment campaign;
- develop a state recruitment campaign that will coincide with the national campaign;
- work with AdoptUSKids as a pilot state to develop Indian family resources;
- make the current State of Wisconsin post-adoption resource center (PARC) services available to all adoptive and foster care families;
- identify the most appropriate permanence option for children in OHC earlier through our permanency consultation timeline and role of the State Permanency Consultant;
- focus on cross-jurisdictional sharing of resources;
- combine the foster family and adoptive family assessments into one format to be used for both purposes; and
- train state, county, tribal, and private agency staff on MEPA and ICWA issues to remove barriers.

All of these efforts are focused on ensuring that children in need of permanence are placed with the resource that can best meet their needs as early in the out-of-home care process as possible. This will greatly reduce multiple placements and the trauma that children experience from multiple placements.

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Plan (CAPTA)**

As a result of the Child and Family Services Review conducted in August of 2003, a number of issues were identified as needing improvement. These issues are all incorporated into the Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) submitted in April of 2004 and currently awaiting approval. A number of these program enhancement activities will be funded, at least in part, under the CAPTA grant. The first two years of the CAPTA five-year Plan consist entirely of activities in the PEP related to one or more of the 14 areas delineated in CAPTA and to efforts to strengthen our compliance with CAPTA requirements added with the 2003 reauthorization. The subsequent three years of the five-year Plan will focus on other initiatives that are expected to grow out of the PEP activities.

### **A. Scope of CPS Intervention**

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Define the scope of cases requiring CPS intervention.

This initiative resulted from observations from both the PEP Core Team and technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment (NRCCM). In part due to Wisconsin having a county-administered system with a strong tradition of independence, there is significant variation in the following decisions: screening (whether to respond to a report or to close it without contact), urgency (how quickly to respond), and the use and character of a non-CPS response to reports (e.g. “child welfare checks”). These are all decisions generally associated with the intake function.

Policy guidance for the intake function has not been revised since 1994 and does not address the critical issues of screening criteria or urgency criteria or the legal issues surrounding a decision to visit a family when the concerns in a report are not consistent with child maltreatment or the likelihood of child maltreatment occurring. County agencies have been requesting guidelines for screening and for urgency and want greater consistency statewide in these decisions. As more and more counties have implemented Wisconsin’s Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (WiSACWIS) and consequently the Wisconsin Model of practice operationalized in WiSACWIS, the interest in defining the agency role in non-CPS cases has also risen.

Every decision in the CPS case process is dependent on a clear understanding of who the CPS system is designed to serve. Screening and urgency criteria must reflect and support this understanding. Criteria for information gathering and analysis at initial assessment, which cases are opened for ongoing services, and when cases can be closed are all dependent upon a clear understanding of whom the CPS system serves.

A workgroup consisting of staff from the Bureau of Programs and Policies (BPP), county agencies, tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships, convened and supported with technical assistance from the NRCCM, has been established and begun work. The group will analyze current decision making about what types of cases counties throughout the state serve and develop policy in, at a minimum, the following areas: definition of who the CPS system seeks to serve, screening criteria, agency response to non-CPS issues, and criteria for response time.

Other issues that need clarity are: 1) how to record multiple reports of the same incident or episode of alleged maltreatment and multiple findings within the same episode; and 2) when to name a particular person as a maltreater. Multiple reports and findings have resulted in confusion for staff as to how they should be documented, resulting at times in inflated reports of maltreatment or an inaccurate perception of recurrence of maltreatment. In addition, lack of clear policy on who may be named as a maltreater has resulted in young children being named when in other systems they cannot be held responsible for their actions because of age. It has also created problems for law enforcement investigations. The naming of a maltreater begins at intake, with the naming of an alleged maltreater. Either the workgroup already in place discussed above will address these issues, or another workgroup will be established to develop policy to address these issues.

All of the above policies will be developed into the Intake Standard, which will become part of the *Child Protective Services Investigation Standards*, originally issued in 1994. Initial training on the new Intake Standard will be provided at regional roundtables. The policies and criteria will also be integrated into the appropriate training courses provided by the Child Welfare Training Partnerships. The WiSACWIS Project Team and BPP staff will analyze the current system design and make any necessary changes to support the new policies.

All of the above work will be completed within one year.

## B. State Standards

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)].
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Increase our ability to help children remain safely at home by updating the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* regarding safety assessment, safety planning, and assessment of parental protective capacities.

As discussed in the five-year Report, safety assessment and planning is a skilled activity essential to CPS practice throughout the life of a case, yet it continues to be difficult for many caseworkers and supervisors. It is particularly difficult for staff to develop safety plans that are sufficient in controlling the threats to safety and to develop measurable treatment plans that are effective in establishing and maintaining a safe environment.

In studying the issue, the PEP Core Team came to believe that part of the problem was difficulty on the part of CPS staff to recognize and address various issues such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health problems. Although the safety assessment instrument and safety planning format in the Wisconsin Model and WiSACWIS clearly incorporate the above concerns, as well as others that threaten a child's safety, caseworkers may not have the skills to identify them in all cases and to effectively manage them with in-home plans.

In addition to concerns about caseworker skills and knowledge, BPP staff and PEP Core Team participants identified the need to incorporate the concept of parental protective capacities – those behaviors and perceptions that act as a buffer and barrier to safety threats – in caseworker training and in policies and decision making instruments. Current policies reference protective capacities, some instruments, such as the family assessment, incorporate some protective capacities, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships offer training which discusses protective capacities. However, there is a need to clearly incorporate the identification of parental protective capacities – those that exist and those that need to be enhanced – in all relevant decision making instruments throughout the case process and to assure that caseworkers and supervisors have the understanding and skills necessary to apply the concepts in achieving safe environments for children. This will provide a clearer path for establishing sufficient in-home safety plans and for defining when a family is “done” and no further CPS services are needed.

Modifications may need to be made to the current safety assessment and safety planning instruments to reflect the current available wisdom on safety assessment. We began formally assessing safety as a distinct decision, separate from risk, in 1987. We revised the instruments over the years as new knowledge became available. We need to review recent advances in the field regarding safety decision-making and determine whether and how current instruments should be revised. To accomplish this:

- BPP will establish a workgroup of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal staff, with representatives from domestic violence programs. Using technical assistance from NRCCM, we will update the *CPS Investigation Standards* and *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* to reflect the best current knowledge in safety and assure that staff recognize and understand the conditions and behaviors that make a child unsafe.
- Tools in WiSACWIS will be revised, as necessary. BPP will develop and issue clear, comprehensive instructions for documenting safety assessments and safety plans in WiSACWIS.
- Safety training curricula will be revised and expanded to reflect the revised standards and to support the acquisition of the skills necessary to develop, implement, and monitor effective safety plans. This may include the development of new courses in safety assessment and planning.

This initiative will begin when the Intake Standard is completed. All of the activities will be completed in two years.



## C. Family Participation

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Improve family participation in case planning.

As discussed in the CAPTA five-year Report, efforts have been made over the previous five years to increase family participation in case planning. The *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines* require it, and the Child Welfare Training Partnerships have been providing training that reflects and supports the standard. However, this standard has not been achieved statewide. Barriers to achieving the standard include lack of clarity and detail regarding the policy, lack of skills necessary to engage the family and develop a less authoritarian helping relationship, high caseloads, and lack of a clear road map.

We expect to provide a clearer road map through the efforts of the Intake Standard workgroup and the workgroup clarifying and revising safety assessment and planning. In order to address concerns about lack of clarity in the policy requiring family involvement in case planning, a workgroup of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal staff will be established to revise the standards as needed to promote family participation in case plan development. The revised standard will be developed and issued within 2 years.

During the following three years, training to increase caseworker skills in engaging families will be developed or adapted from current successful curricula and delivered.

## D. Safety of Children with Relatives

CAPTA areas:

- Enhancing the general child protective system by developing, improving, and implementing risk and safety assessment tools and protocols. [section 106(a)(4)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

Wisconsin goal: Effectively assess the safety of a child placed in a relative's home.

Although the Wisconsin Model (and WiSACWIS) have, as part of the Out-Of-Home Safety Plan instrument, a process for assessing the safety of a specific child when placed in a specific licensed facility, there is currently no process for assessing safety specific to an unlicensed relative's home. CPS staff have been reluctant to place children in relatives' homes in the absence of a clear process for assessing the safety of that placement. Some of the safety threats

in the safety assessment tool used with families are applicable, but revisions and additions are needed to respond to the questions and concerns that must be addressed when placing a child with a relative.

We will review current models for assessing the safety of kinship placements, as well as relevant literature, and seek technical assistance from the NRCCM to develop criteria, policy, and procedures for assessing safety in kinship placements. We will:

- issue the policy and develop and issue guidance for documenting the assessment within the current WiSACWIS system
- work with the Child Welfare Training Partnerships to include this safety assessment procedure in the relevant training curricula

The above activities will be completed within 2 years. In the subsequent three years of this five-year-Plan, we will review whether WiSACWIS should be modified to include a specific instrument for assessing safety in kinship homes, rather than requiring the use of existing documentation formats.

#### E. Program Coordination

CAPTA areas:

- Creating and improving the use of multidisciplinary teams and interagency protocols to enhance investigations; and improving legal preparation and representation, including—(i) procedures for appealing and responding to appeals of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect; and (ii) provisions for the appointment of an individual appointed to represent a child in judicial proceedings. [section 106(a)(2)]
- Developing, strengthening, and facilitating training including—(A) training regarding research-based strategies to promote collaboration with the families; (B) training regarding the legal duties of such individuals; and (C) personal safety training for caseworkers. [section 106(a)(6)]

#### Child Protective Services/Law Enforcement Coordination

Wisconsin goal: Improve the coordination between CPS and law enforcement agencies to increase safety for children and other family members while assuring clarity in the differences between the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Many county agencies in Wisconsin have long-standing cooperative working relationships with their local law enforcement agencies. These relationships vary from those where roles are clearly differentiated to those where roles and activities are somewhat merged. The issuance of the *Standard for Collaboration with Law Enforcement Agencies*, developed with input from law enforcement officials, began a discussion between the two systems regarding roles and procedures. The new CAPTA requirements for advising the alleged maltreater of the allegations at the first contact and for training to assure that CPS staff understand and observe the rights of families have helped to underscore the need for further discussion and policy development to continue to promote coordination while clearly differentiating roles and responsibilities. Wisconsin's situation may be unique in that CPS responds to cases of abuse by persons not in a caregiving role, thus overlapping significantly with law enforcement cases.

The National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues provided training and technical assistance in June of 2004 to a group consisting of BPP, BMCW, county and tribal CPS staff, as well as corporation counsels, assistant district attorneys, law enforcement and state legal staff, state quality assurance staff, and representatives of the Child Welfare Training Partnerships. As this plan is being written prior to the occurrence of this event, we do not currently know what issues for policy development, training for CPS and law enforcement, or statutory change might be identified by the group. Based on the group's observations and recommendations, and consistent with other initiatives in the PEP, we will develop a work plan to assist both CPS agencies and law enforcement agencies to adjust to any changes needed in their protocols and procedures. This work plan is likely to involve the Department of Justice in supporting training for law enforcement officers.

Other initiatives are likely to impact procedures and protocols between CPS and law enforcement: expanding Memoranda of Understanding between law enforcement and CPS to include domestic violence agencies, determining who CPS serves, evaluating the purpose and usefulness of the substantiation decision, and requiring greater emphasis on engaging families. We will continue involving law enforcement professionals over the next five years in identifying the impact on their agencies resulting from changes in CPS practice and policy and advocate for training and other supports that will assist in any changes that law enforcement agencies might need to make.

#### DV/CPS Collaboration Project

Wisconsin goal: Improve the CPS response in cases where domestic violence is present.

The DCFS plans to continue its efforts in supporting and enhancing the collaborative relationship between domestic violence and CPS agencies. Specialized curriculum on domestic violence for CPS caseworkers will be updated to reflect changes in law, best practice, and policy. This will include an expanded training component on collaboration with domestic violence service providers.

Information on domestic violence issues will be included as part of pre-service and/or foundation training.

The DCFS will also:

- Include information on the identification of and response to domestic violence in the development of the CPS Intake Standard and update of the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*. This is linked with the PEP-related activities discussed earlier in this five-year Plan.
- Identify other child welfare policy areas with domestic violence-related safety concerns and work with DV advocates to address the changes needed.
- Continue the annual joint regional meetings of DV and CPS agencies.
- Continue regular training and updates on the CPS system and policies for DV program staff.
- Include domestic violence agencies in Memoranda of Understanding between CPS and law enforcement.

## Guardian ad Litem Training

Wisconsin goal: Support an ongoing multi-disciplinary effort to provide training for guardians ad litem.

The DCFS will continue to cosponsor the Guardian ad Litem conference each fall. BPP staff are involved in the multi-disciplinary planning committee to assure that information critical to representing children who have been maltreated, who are unsafe in their homes, or who are in the out-of-home care system is presented at each conference.

## F. Coordinated Services

CAPTA area:

- Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems) and to address the health needs, including mental health needs, of children identified as abused or neglected, including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports. [section 106(a)(14)].

Wisconsin goal: Expand the coordinated services team initiative.

The Coordinated Services Team (CST) initiative continues. Although the initiative is not funded by CAPTA, the staff position funded by CAPTA will continue to provide technical assistance to the initiative to assure consistency with the Standards for all cases that are part of the CPS system.

The effort to evaluate and compare the case planning format for CPS cases with the format for CST cases will continue as part of the PEP activities described above in reviewing and revising Standards.

## G. Substantiation Decision

CAPTA areas:

- Improving the intake, assessment, screening, and investigation of reports of abuse and neglect. [section 106(a)(1)]
- Improving the case management, including ongoing case monitoring, and delivery of services and treatment provided to children and their families. [section 106(a)(3)].

Wisconsin goal: Assess the impact of the substantiation decision on the effectiveness of safety assessment and safety plans and the effectiveness of efforts to engage the family in meaningful treatment planning.

“Substantiation” is the finding made by child protective services (CPS) staff that a child has been maltreated or that a specific person has maltreated a child and is based on the lowest evidentiary standard (i.e., a preponderance of the evidence). There are problems associated with

substantiation. It is used for purposes for which it was not originally intended (e.g., criminal prosecutions, gatekeeping for CHIPS proceedings, licensing and employment decisions, and gatekeeping for case opening and eligibility for services). This problem is heightened by the lack of uniformity in application from one county to another in terms of what is considered abuse and neglect, and which cases are screened in and screened out.

Substantiation creates problems unique to Wisconsin CPS. The statutory definitions of physical abuse and sexual abuse include abuse to a child by any other person, including another child. This has led to young children being substantiated as child abusers rather than identified as children in need of protection or services. It has also led to CPS staff substantiating individuals as maltreaters in cases of stranger assault, date rape, and other assaults on children by persons in a non-caregiving role, including homicides, in the midst of a law enforcement investigation.

Under federal regulation and state law, any person substantiated as having maltreated a child is entitled to an appeal of that decision. The substantiation appeal process has resulted in counties not substantiating a person as maltreating a child even if they could. A particular concern regarding the appeal process is that children who have been abused may be called to testify at an administrative hearing against a parent with whom they are residing. This raises additional safety, as well as many other, concerns for the child. In cases where both a CPS assessment and a law enforcement investigation are being conducted, district attorneys and law enforcement agencies have voiced concern that the administrative hearing to appeal the substantiation decision is used by defense attorneys as a fishing expedition that undermines the criminal prosecution.

Substantiating maltreatment epitomizes incident-based child protective services practice, which we have been moving away from. Our *CPS Investigation Standards*, originally established in 1994, emphasizes safety and risk assessment to determine a family's need for services to reduce risk and establish and maintain safety. Identifying safety issues leads to actions to protect the safety of the child; substantiation of maltreatment merely identifies who did what to whom.

The DCFS is proposing to establish a two-phase approach to resolving issues and determining policy. First, a workgroup comprised of state, county, and tribal staff will discuss the problems/issues and develop preliminary recommendations, ranging from clearer policy and additional training to the elimination of substantiation as a case finding. This will involve the use of research, both national and Wisconsin-specific, related to issues around substantiation, including reliability and validity and effectiveness in protecting children. The second phase will add selected groups to the discussion, including law enforcement, district attorneys and corporation counsels, licensing staff, legislators, and the child welfare training partnerships. The DCFS will involve staff of both the Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Resource Center on Child Maltreatment, with whom we have already been consulting.

The workgroup recommendations, if implemented will require training for a variety of county staff, including CPS, court/legal, and law enforcement. In addition, the DCFS may need to counteract the misperception that making changes to substantiating maltreaters represents a "softer" approach to child abuse. At the same time, this may be an opportunity for us to clarify that, while both CPS and law enforcement are often both involved in child abuse/neglect cases, they have unique roles and functions.

### Description of Services and Training to be Provided [sec. 106(b)(2)(C)]

The majority of the training to be provided with CAPTA funds has been described above. In addition, CAPTA funds will continue to be used over the next five years to cosponsor the annual Child Abuse and Neglect Conference, which provides training and networking opportunities for CPS staff, services providers, advocates, mandated reporters, and others involved in the broader child protection system.

Funding will be provided to each of Wisconsin's four regional Child Welfare Training Partnerships to fund curriculum development and training for CPS staff and supervisors not eligible for funding under Title IV-E. The next planned revisions of the Core training of the Partnerships will be for the activities and skills necessary for intake and initial assessment. These curricula will be modified as soon as the policies and standards revisions are completed by the workgroups discussed above in the State Plan. As other training needs are identified as a result of policy development, CAPTA funds will be used to support that training, at least in part.

An area where we continue to focus our training efforts is safety decision making. The DCFS has been working with the Training Partnerships and ACTION for Child Protection to develop, revise, and provide additional safety training in the state. We are currently in the process of training trainers statewide. The training will begin to be offered across the state this summer. Following is a description of the training:

*Managing Sufficient Safety in CPS* is a two-day learning experience for caseworkers and supervisors emphasizing providing sufficient safety intervention. The two-day workshop is followed by a complementary supervisory learning opportunity concerned with consultation. Training begins with a review of basic safety assessment and safety planning competencies leading to consideration of sufficiency of safety plans. The curriculum promotes safety intervention as a continuum of assessment and planning not specific to a particular function. The curriculum addresses essential knowledge and skill required by all CPS staff regardless of initial assessment or ongoing assignment. The curriculum will emphasize critical safety assessment competency, developing sufficient safety plans, and managing sufficient safety plans. The curriculum includes attention to safety management of safety plans within ongoing CPS.

The supervisory workshop emphasizes the consultative role supportive of building safety intervention competency in CPS staff. The following is an overview of the training:

#### Day 1

- Essential safety intervention concepts and skills; the objective is review and mastery
- Identification of safety factors
- Analysis of safety factors
- Case experience
- Safety planning concepts; introduction of sufficiency concept

#### Day 2

- Ongoing safety management responsibilities
- Process and principles

- Safety plan management experiences
- Evaluation of sufficient safety plans

### Day 3

- The CPS supervisor as a consultant
- Deliberation on consultation skills
- Review and application of the Supervisory Consultation Guide

For the most part, CAPTA funds are used to support training, policy development, technical assistance, and program development rather than direct services to individuals, families, or communities. CAPTA funds support a full-time position in the DCFS, a CPS Specialist, who, in addition to coordinating policy and program development and training initiatives, responds directly to the public on concerns about how CPS cases have been handled, how to access services and other resources, and how the CPS program and child welfare system in Wisconsin generally operate. This position also provides technical assistance to communities and providers that are developing policies and practices about interaction with the CPS system as they seek to provide better services to their clients.

### Assurances/Compliance with New Eligibility Requirements

The following is a description of Wisconsin's compliance with the new CAPTA requirements added in 2003. Statutory language referenced in this section can be found at: <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>, choosing Chapter 48 Children's Code and entering in the appropriate statute number.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ii)] *Policies and procedures...to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substances or withdrawal symptoms from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers ...notify the child protective services system...*

Wisconsin Statutes state that “Any hospital employee who provides health care, social worker or [court appointed] intake worker ...may refer an infant ... to a physician for testing of the bodily fluids ... for controlled substances or controlled substance analogs...The physician may test the infant ... to ascertain whether or not the infant ... has controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the bodily fluids...If the results of the test indicate that the infant does have controlled substances or controlled substance analogs in the infant's bodily fluids, the physician shall make a report under s.46.238...” [Sec.146.0255, WI Stats.]

The report is not made under Chapter 48, the Children's Code, and therefore is not a child abuse or neglect report. Instead, the report is made under Chapter 46, which is the authority establishing county human/social service departments.

Although this statutory language has existed for some years and CPS agencies have been accepting and responding to such reports, a policy memo was issued reminding CPS agencies of their responsibility to accept such reports.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iii)] *The development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms.*

Wisconsin Statutes state “If a county department ... or [BMCW] receives a report under s.146.0255 (2), the county department shall offer to provide appropriate services and treatment to the child and the child’s mother...or the county department shall make arrangements for the provision of appropriate services or treatment.” [Sec. 46.238, Stats.].

This statutory language has also existed for some years. The policy memo issued reminding county agencies and BMCW of their responsibility to accept such reports (see above) included policy requiring an assessment of safety of the child and the development and execution of a safety plan, if the child is determined to be unsafe.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(iv)] *Procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports.*

Risk assessment tools, in addition to a safety assessment tool, are part of WiSACWIS and the Wisconsin Model. Risk assessment and safety assessment are required by the *CPS Investigation Standards* and the *CPS Ongoing Services Standards and Practice Guidelines*.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(v)] *Triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service.*

Policy was developed and issued requiring CPS agencies to provide information and referral services to community agencies for families that they have determined do not need CPS services following an initial assessment and families they have determined no longer need CPS services following a case progress evaluation. The discussion with the family and the referral process must be documented in the case record. This has been the practice in most CPS agencies for years and is now reflected in published policy.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(ix)] *Provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.*

Existing state statutory language authorizes disclosure to a “federal agency, state agency of this state or any other state or local governmental unit located in this state or any other state that has a need for a report or record in order to carry out its responsibility to protect children from abuse and neglect...” [Sec. 48.981(7)(a)17., Stats]. The Wisconsin Attorney General issued an opinion that the statutory language requires that information be released to the authorized entities or person on demand.

- [Sec. 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii)] *Provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role,...shall be appointed to represent the child.*

In 1997, Wisconsin established Supreme Court Rule Chapter 35 (Eligibility for Appointment as Guardian ad Litem for a Minor), which prohibits an attorney from accepting a GAL appointment from the court in juvenile and family court proceedings unless specified training criteria are met. The rule became effective in 1999. Enforcement of the rule is handled at the county level.



Under s. 48.07(5)(c), Stats., Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers must complete a training program prior to being designated as a CASA and each volunteer must complete continuing education annually. The training shall include instruction on recognizing child abuse and neglect, cultural competency, child development, court procedures, permanency planning, the role of the CASA volunteer, information gathering and documentation, and juvenile court observation.

In addition to the above requirements, there is a conference every year with training for guardians ad litem, for which they receive credit. The first conference was held in 1999. The conference is well attended every year and receives high evaluations from participants. The DCFS staff are involved in planning for the conference and the DCFS is a co-sponsor of the conference.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii)] *Provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter.*

Policy was developed, published, and disseminated requiring CPS representatives to advise the alleged maltreater, at the beginning of the initial contact, of the allegations against him or her. The policy was developed with input from county CPS staff, tribal child welfare staff, law enforcement, and legal counsel. It balances a person's right to honest information with the need to fulfill statutory mandates to protect children from serious harm.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix)] *Provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment.*

An initial training was held on June 11, 2004 for representative CPS managers, corporation counsels, law enforcement officers, and training staff. Additional trainings will be held in each region of the state by the end of the year. A brochure for parents, including a description of the CPS process and the family's rights, is being developed and will be issued to all counties and tribes and BMCW to use when interviewing parents by the end of the 2004. Representatives from the Child Welfare Training Partnerships participated in the June 11 training in order to begin to assess how to integrate the legal duties of CPS representatives and the legal rights of families into core training curricula.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx)] *Provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers.*

A major initiative in Wisconsin's PEP is expanding the frequency, accessibility, and application value of child welfare training in Wisconsin. This includes significant training for supervisors to assist them in providing clinical supervision for caseworkers. Another initiative in the PEP is to evaluate the workload of caseworkers and supervisors and the availability and accessibility of services needed to keep children safe and address the underlying contributors to child abuse and

neglect. It was the opinion of the PEP Core Team that reasonable workloads and the availability of needed services are critical to retaining child welfare staff.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi)] *Provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

A policy requiring referral to early intervention services (Birth to 3 Program) of a child under the age of 3 years who is substantiated as having been abused or neglected was developed, published, and disseminated to all county CPS agencies and BMCW. The policy was developed with input from county CPS professionals, Birth to 3 Program Staff and legal counsel. Activities related to the referral must be documented in the case record.

- [Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii)] *Not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36), provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household.*

Wisconsin Statutes state that “The department, a county department, a child welfare agency or a school board shall obtain all of the following with respect to a [foster home, treatment foster home, group home, shelter care facility and adoptive home and] a non client resident of an entity...: A criminal history search from the records maintained by the department of justice...” [Sec. 48.685(2)(am), Stats.]

Citizen Review Panel Requirements - The 2003 CAPTA amendments created the following additional requirements.

- *requiring each citizen review panel to examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of State and local agencies to evaluate the extent to which the agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities [section 106(c)(4)(A)];*
- *requiring each panel to provide for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community [section 106(c)(4)(C)]; and*
- *requiring each panel to make recommendations to the State and public on improving the child protective services system at the State and local levels. The appropriate State agency is to respond to the panel and State and local child protective services agencies in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The State agency’s response must include a description of whether or how the State will incorporate the recommendations of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the State and local CPS systems [section 106(c)(6)].*

Some of the functions of the Citizen Review Panels are being incorporated into the quality assurance procedures being developed as part of Wisconsin PEP. Citizen Review Panel members will participate in CFSR-type program reviews, which will include a review of practice not only in their own counties but also in other counties across the state. This will give them a broader view of practice and policy in the state.

A description of the new requirements has been shared with each panel. More funding is being appropriated to the three citizen review panels to assist them in carrying out the additional

functions. In addition, more technical assistance will be provided by the DCFS, and the DCFS will also increase coordination of the Citizen Review Panel activities with other quality assurance and policy development activities.

Citizen Review Panel members participated in the training and discussion conducted by the National Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues on family rights. They will be part of informing changes in CPS practice in Wisconsin related to assuring that family rights are understood and respected throughout a family's involvement with CPS. Citizen Review Panel members will also be part of the workgroups established, as discussed in the State Plan, to develop, clarify, and modify statewide policies and standards of practice.

## **Chafee Independent Living**

Wisconsin will continue to operate its Independent Living (IL) Program to address the needs of youth in and exiting foster care, comply with the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act), and follow the recommendations of the Wisconsin June 2000 *Independent Living for Children in Out-of-Home Care* study. IL services are provided through Wisconsin's county-administered child welfare service system and by tribes, and programs may vary in their approaches to implement and administer independent living services.

### *Program Eligibility*

Wisconsin's IL Program provides services and supports to youth aged 15-21 years. Eligibility for Wisconsin Chafee services includes those youth that have been in out-of-home care (OHC) placement in Wisconsin for at least 6 months after the age of 15 or older with eligibility continuing to the age of 21 years. Youth that are in OHC placement for six months and adopted after the age of 15 years are also eligible for services. Youth exiting care prior to age 18 due to adoption, guardianship (s. 48.977), long-term Kinship Care or hospitalization, may continue to be eligible for IL services, although eligibility for certain benefits (e.g., room and board, Medicaid) may be limited by the Chafee Act.

### *Distribution of Funds*

Chafee funds are allocated via state/county and state/tribal contracts. Recipients of CFCIP and ETV-funded allocations will be expanded in 2005 to include 71 counties, 3 tribes, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW), and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. The Chafee funding will continue to be utilized to develop, expand, and strengthen local independent living services for youth. The State allocates funding to these local agencies based on the average number of youth eligible for and receiving independent living services in each community. This formula was developed and utilized to ensure that each agency receives an amount of the available funding that is commensurate with the number of local youth eligible for and receiving assistance to achieve independence.

Wisconsin has received reductions in federal funding for both the Independent Living and Education and Training Vouchers Programs. For FFY 2004, CFCIP funding was reduced by 23% and the ETV Program funding was reduced by 18% versus the prior year. These cuts occurred despite the fact that the number of older youth eligible for and receiving IL services has increased during the funding periods. While Wisconsin will strive to ensure that youth receive efficient and effective IL services and supports, significant program changes may become necessary over the next few years to reflect the decreased federal resources and an increased service population.

**National Evaluations:** The State of Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Children and Family Services, will cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the programs in achieving the purposes of the CFCIP. In addition, Wisconsin, along with Iowa and Illinois, is participating in an ongoing multi-state evaluation of older youth exiting foster care. Chapin Hall Center for Children, University of Chicago, is conducting this research project and has launched Wave 2 of a three-wave study. Evaluation results will be utilized to shape future independent living services for youth in and exiting care. Results may also be utilized for future federal reporting.

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program:

- 1. Describe how the State will establish, expand or strengthen its post secondary education and training to achieve the purpose of the ETV program and to accomplish the purposes of the Acts. Describe the methods used to operate the program efficiently and assure compliance with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i):*

The DCFS will utilize the ETV program funds to expand the independent living services at the state and local levels. The existing DCFS Scholarship Program for youth aging out of out-of-home care will increase the amount of the individual scholarships available to youth for post-secondary education and training and extend the period for which youth will be eligible for the scholarship funds. Additional funding will be provided to local agencies to expand services and increase financial support to assist youth with preparation for and participation in post-secondary institutions.

In 2003, upon receiving federal approval of this plan, the state distributed additional funding and information regarding program requirements to all county and tribal departments of human or social services for implementation by January 1, 2004. A numbered memo, DCFS Memo Series 2003-10, mandating the implementation of the new program and outlining program requirements, was disseminated statewide to all counties and tribes providing independent living services under Wisconsin's Independent Living Program. The memo describes ETV Program requirements and desired outcomes that must be met while allowing individual agencies the flexibility to implement the services locally in the most effective manner possible for all youth. State-facilitated meetings were held in each region of the State to further explain and discuss program implementation, requirements, and practice issues regarding the ETV program.

To increase the likelihood that youth will be motivated and eligible to participate in post-secondary institutions, local agency Independent Living Coordinators will coordinate team and other resource involvement in addition to working directly with youth for several years prior to their aging out of out-of-home care. Youth will be supported using the original CFCIP funds to complete a high school education or equivalent, improving their ability to meet post-secondary education or training program eligibility requirements. The CFCIP and ETV Programs will then provide ongoing support to youth by providing services and financial assistance necessary to help them successfully participate in and complete post-secondary programs.

It is anticipated that services, support, and financial assistance will be individualized, based on the assessment of the youth's needs. Generally, assistance will be provided in accordance with the following guidelines:

- The DCFS Scholarship Program will provide funding for any direct costs; i.e., tuition and fees associated with attending an institution of higher learning.
- Scholarships will not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance as defined in section 472 of the Higher Education Act.
- Local agencies will utilize ETV funds for the purchase of technical equipment or assistance to include, but not be limited to, computers, calculators, and supplies associated with post-secondary coursework.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program and local agencies may provide additional assistance or support necessary for successful completion of higher education, including, but not limited to: tutoring, transportation, books, child care, housing, program entry testing, costs, incentives, leadership/workshop/vocational activities, etc.

ETV funds will be allocated and accounted for via separate contracting, accounting, and reporting processes.

## ***2. Program Eligibility:***

- Education and training vouchers (ETV) will be available to all youth meeting current State independent living eligibility criteria (i.e., youth aged 15 to 21 years placed in out-of-home care at the age of 15 or older for a period of not less than six months) for costs associated with post-secondary attendance and participation.
- Eligibility will also be extended to youth up to 23 years of age who were participating in the voucher program on the date they attained age 21, as long as they are enrolled in a full-time post-secondary program and are making satisfactory progress toward the completion of that program.
- Youth adopted from foster care after attaining 6 months in out-of-home care followed by adoption at the age of 15 years or older shall be considered eligible for ETV program assistance.

## ***3. Education and Training Vouchers Program Criteria:***

- Vouchers shall be available for the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.
- Voucher amounts shall not exceed the lesser of \$5000 per year or the total cost of attendance, as defined in section 472 of that Act.
- The amount of a voucher under this section shall be disregarded for purposes of determining the recipient's eligibility for, or the amount of, any other Federal or federally-supported assistance, except that the total amount of all assistance should not exceed the total cost of attendance. The DCFS Scholarship Program shall take appropriate steps to prevent duplication of benefits under this and other Federal or federally-supported programs.
- The program is coordinated with other appropriate education and training programs. State and local agencies will partner with secondary and post-secondary institutions and each other to increase awareness of the educational challenges faced by youth aging out of out-of-home care and the ETV Program. This collaboration was initiated by Wisconsin in 2001 under the CFCIP, resulting in the development of the statewide Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group. Modifications to the existing DCFS Scholarship Program were made according to input received by all of these partners to better meet needs of youth while fulfilling the new requirements of the ETV program.

### ***Program Development:***

- Assessments of youth skill, needs, and interest areas will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Youth, child welfare agencies, foster parents, and biological family members will participate in development of case plans to support youth's educational goals. Case plans shall include, but are not limited to, assisting youth to: identify post-secondary education or training as a viable option, identify potential vocations and careers, identify and address other areas of need (e.g., housing, transportation) that impact successful participation in higher education, and develop Independent Living Transition Plans to enhance the success of the youth transitioning to self sufficiency.
- Outreach efforts to continue supporting youth after leaving out-of-home care will continue as implemented under the CFCIP. Additional efforts will be implemented to inform, remind, and encourage these youth of the higher education assistance available to them prior to reaching age 21 and potentially up to age 23.
- The DCFS Scholarship Program will be expanded to include scholarship funds up to \$5000 per youth per year and allow youths to receive assistance through the fund on an ongoing basis as long as other scholarship eligibility criteria (e.g., satisfactory progress) are met. Youth must complete an application for the scholarship program and provide proof of acceptance to the post-secondary institution.
- Funding for attendance costs at post-secondary institutions will be provided directly to the institution upon receipt of a letter of acceptance/admission from the institution on behalf of the youth.
- Purchase orders may be utilized for other costs associated with participation in the post-secondary program.
- Data will be maintained by the local agencies and the DCFS Scholarship Program, including: the number of youth completing a high school education, the number of youth attending post-secondary institutions, the number and types of degrees or certification achieved by participating youth, and the amount and type of financial assistance provided utilizing ETV funds.
- Independent living roundtables regarding the ETV Program were held prior to program implementation in 2003-04 and will continue to be held in 2005. These meetings are scheduled in various regions around the State to provide technical assistance to local Independent Living Coordinators and facilitate sharing and discussion between caseworkers and agencies regarding practice issues in the area of helping youth access and achieve higher education.

## Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)

1. *Discuss how the state will design, conduct and/or strengthen programs to achieve the purposes of section 477(b)(2)(A) and section 477(a)(1-6) of the Act.*

**Political Subdivisions:** Wisconsin has 72 counties and 11 federally-recognized tribes. All counties are currently and will continue operating CFCIP-funded independent living programs 2004-09.

Tribes have been given the opportunity to receive CFCIP funds from the State to operate tribal independent living programs. Two of the 11 tribes, Ho-Chunk and Lac du Flambeau, have historically and will continue to receive independent living funds. Effective October 1, 2004, the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) tribe will also receive IL funds to serve eligible tribal youth. Independent living services by tribes are coordinated with services by county agencies through child welfare coordination agreements between counties and tribes called 161 agreements. The DCFS is prepared to directly fund other tribes that wish to operate independent living programs.

All Wisconsin counties have historically operated some aspects of independent living programs, including working with foster care providers to teach youth independent living skills and permanency planning responsibilities. The majority of counties also provided services to improve the skills of youth to prepare them to exit out-of-home care and make successful transitions to adulthood. With the implementation of CFCIP, funds have been allocated to all counties so they can provide services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and a transitional services component for youth age 18-21. Start-up funds were allocated to counties in Spring 2001 to expand service capacity, and all counties are funded to deliver a full range of independent living services. Smaller counties were encouraged to form multi-county consortia to deliver independent living services, particularly services to improve skills of youth aged 15-18 and the transitional services component for youth aged 18-21. In 2004, nine counties are organized into 4 service consortia.

Wisconsin's Independent Living Program will design and deliver programs to achieve the purposes of sections 477(b)(2)(A) and 477(a)(1-6) of the Act. CFSP statewide goals and activities to address these purposes are as follow:

### *A. Help Youth Transition to Self-Sufficiency*

- Allocate IL funding to agencies for direct services, expanding the number of tribes receiving these funds from 2 to 3. The Ho-Chunk and Lac du Flambeau tribes will continue to receive IL funding for direct services. Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) tribe will receive funding for tribal IL services effective October 1, 2004. Tribes not directly funded for IL services will continue to collaborate with county agencies for the provision of IL services for tribal youth. Training and technical assistance will be provided to LCO prior to, during, and following the transition of youth IL services from Sawyer County to the tribe.
- Continue providing an array of services and support for youth that address the following areas: secondary education, post-secondary education, vocational and employment support, daily living skills, budget and financial management, housing, health education and prevention, connection to caring adults, and risk prevention. Program design may vary



according to geographic factors; e.g., rural or urban, availability of community resources, housing options. Agencies funded for IL services may serve youth directly or contract for IL services through other agencies. Collaboration with other professionals, caring adults, human service agencies, and other community resources will remain a critical source for obtaining and coordinating services for youth.

- Continue providing financial assistance as appropriate for room and board, education, and other needs that may arise as youth work to achieve self-sufficiency. Local IL programs are allowed to spend up to 25% of their allocation for room and board for youth meeting the room and board requirements (i.e., youth aging out of care that are in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) as stated in the Chafee Act. Youth may receive Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program assistance locally or through the state's DCFS Scholarship Program. Other financial assistance for IL-related costs may be provided at the discretion of the local agency. Connecting youth to other community resources that assist clients financially will also be utilized.
- Assess each youth's level of independent living skills functioning and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) to address assessed areas of need and youth interests. Individual assessments and plans are required for each eligible youth; however, agencies may select the assessment method or tool used and the ILTP format.
- Provide IL training for IL Coordinators, foster parents, members of youth teams, and other county, tribal, and private agency caseworkers. The State IL Coordinator, upon request from local agencies, will conduct Basic IL Training for new IL coordinators. Life skills development and other IL training will be developed and conducted in coordination with the University of Wisconsin's Training Partnerships, the National Resource Center for Youth Development, and other resources as appropriate to address specific topics of interest or concern. Sessions on independent living may also be incorporated into other existing training curricula.
- Increase the involvement of foster parents as a key resource for ongoing youth support and skills development. Independent living skills are learned over a lifetime, beginning at a very young age. Foster parents are important people in the healthy development of children and young adults. The foster home is a setting where skills training may be planned or can occur naturally in the course of daily activities. Local IL programs will continue their efforts to work with youth and foster parents, incorporating foster parents as trainers for youth skill development. This will be documented in the Independent Living Transition Plan and the training activities reported annually in the IL reports.
- Extend Medicaid eligibility for youth exiting care at age 18 or older up to age 21 to ensure ongoing health care and increased access to and utilization of health services. In the past few years, Wisconsin has been unable to achieve extended Medicaid benefits for youth aging out of care. Efforts to extend eligibility will be ongoing. See CFSP CFCIP item #7 for a more detailed description of this goal.
- Increase youth participation in the ongoing evaluation and development of IL services. A Youth Advisory Council was created in 2004 and will continue. Other youth meetings and forums to encourage the sharing of information about their experiences in the child welfare

system will be organized in various regions around the state. Information gained from these meetings and other communication with youth will be utilized for assessing existing services, informing policy development, and determining direction for future youth-directed activities.

- Determine if maintaining the current eligibility criteria for IL services is possible. Due to decreased federal funding, it may be necessary to revise the IL eligibility criteria for youth in Wisconsin. Currently, youth that have been in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 years are eligible for IL services and remain eligible up to 21 years. An ongoing analysis of funding, eligible youth, and affordable services will be conducted to determine if this criterion must be revised to effectively serve only those older youth with more intense needs and fewer natural supports.
- Implement federal IL reporting requirements when finalized. Incorporate independent living reporting into the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (WiSACWIS). Wisconsin will modify its existing IL reporting forms to include the proposed National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) Data Items (version dated December 2003). These forms will be disseminated to counties and tribes for annual reporting until the federal reporting requirements are finalized. At that time, the electronic database system will be modified to include the required IL data elements for annual reports.

*B. Help youth receive education, training, and services necessary to obtain **employment**.*

- Continue to assess all eligible youth for independent living skills functioning, including job search and maintenance, and develop an Independent Living Transition Plan based on the assessed levels of skill and youth input.
- Continue to provide all eligible youth with an array of services to support education and training for employment. Youth receiving IL services will receive training, experiential learning experiences, and support to identify, seek, obtain, and maintain employment. Youth assistance may include, but is not limited to, the following areas: procuring of necessary documents, completing applications, education planning, contacting colleges and employers, interview skills, job search, resume writing, social skills on the job, tolerance, conflict management and resolution, transportation, and gaining volunteer and other work-related experience.
- Continue referral and outreach services to link youth to other community agencies and resources for job seeking, training, and financial assistance. For youth to become and remain successfully employed, collaboration among IL coordinators, local job services programs, school counselors, teachers, and community resource agencies must occur. Youth will be assisted in identifying career choices and planning the steps necessary to achieve employment. IL coordinators will assist youth with these tasks and link them to the appropriate resource for continued education, job seeking, job training, transportation, etc.
- Annually compile and analyze data for IL employment-related services and outcomes.

*C. Help youth prepare for and enter post-secondary training and education institutions*

- Develop an Independent Living Transition Plan for each eligible youth that identifies and addresses educational needs and goals for achieving post-secondary education and training. Efforts to assist youth with post-secondary education and training must start several years prior to high school completion. IL Coordinators, school counselors, friends, and family play an important part in motivating youth to pursue higher education or training, followed by helping them identify steps that need to be taken. Education plans containing individualized goals and objectives will be developed for each youth. IL Coordinators will continue to work with high school teachers and counselors to ensure that classes and credits are meeting necessary requirements. Where available, youth will also be connected to pre-college programs.
  - Design, implement, and strengthen the statewide ETV Program to locally assist youth with post-secondary related needs and costs. In 2004, the ETV Program was implemented in Wisconsin. ETV Program funds were allocated to 71 counties, 2 tribes, and the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. In 2005, the list of agencies receiving ETV Program funds will be expanded to include the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe and the Division of Juvenile Corrections. ETV Program funds received by local agencies will be utilized to develop and maintain post-secondary related assistance for former foster youth. Agencies and youth will be encouraged to utilize the DCFS Scholarship Program for payment of tuition, fees, and books. All other costs and types of support will be provided via the local agency.
  - Increase the amount of funding available for youth scholarships through the DCFS Scholarship Program. In 2004, the amount of funding for the DCFS Scholarship Program was increased from \$100,000 to \$125,000 annually. This amount will increase to \$157,740 in 2005. The DCFS Scholarship Program was created to provide grants for post-secondary related education and training for former foster youth. The awards follow the federal ETV Program guidelines, and scholarship awards combined with local ETV Program assistance is limited to \$5,000 per youth annually.
  - Continue the efforts of the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth (HEOY) Advisory Group to help youth access and achieve higher education. The HEOY Advisory Group consists of members of the higher education community along with DCFS and private agency staff. The group will update and develop informational memos and resource materials for statewide dissemination to higher education staff, child welfare caseworkers, youth, foster parents, and other interested parties. Panel presentations to increase awareness about the challenges faced by youth and potential resources will be scheduled around the state. The panel will also help train IL Coordinators and others connected to youth to help them successfully access and maneuver within the higher education system. Efforts will also be ongoing to meet with higher education institutions to help them recognize and develop ways to reach out and help former foster youth access and achieve post-secondary education and training.
  - Compile and analyze data regarding secondary and post-secondary services, support, and outcomes.
- D. Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults.*

- Continue efforts to connect youth to caring adults prior to and after leaving care. IL Coordinators will continue to help youth identify and develop positive relationships with caring adults in their communities. Natural connections with foster parents, social workers, teachers, and family members will continue to be encouraged and supported. Youth may also be connected to organizations in their communities where children are linked with mentors. With youth who are reluctant or unable to connect with others through these more typical means, connections with IL Coordinators and other child welfare caseworkers may become the primary contact for youth leaving care. These connections will be documented in each youth's ILTP.
- Continue to collect data regarding mentoring services and outcomes.

*E. Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment and education and other appropriate support and services for former foster care youth ages 18-21 years.*

- Provide youth with life history and critical documents prior to leaving out-of-home care placement. Efforts will continue to ensure that youth have copies of their birth certificates, social security cards, insurance cards, medical records, high school diploma or high school completion documents, written employment history, and other personal information about their lives and families.
- Every youth aging out of care will have an Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) that addresses the youth's transition from out-of-home care (OHC). Youth will participate directly in the development of their plan goals and activities and accept personal responsibility for gaining skills and independence. Each eligible youth in OHC placement must have an ILTP that is based on an IL skills assessment and incorporated into the permanency plan. As the youth approaches leaving care at 18 years or older, the ILTP will identify ongoing IL needs, goals, and outcomes, and describe how needs will be met and goals/outcomes achieved. The plans, services, and activities will address, but are not limited to, the following areas: high school completion, post-secondary education or training, career planning and employment, safe and stable housing, transportation, health and medical needs/services, community resources, support systems, finances, and youth self goals. The ILTP will also contain contact information for family, friends, and other caring adults identified by the youth to confirm support systems and simplify IL Coordinators' ability to locate and communicate with youth who have left care.
- Continue to make available an array of services and support for 18-21-year-olds. Youth no longer in care will be educated regarding community resources and, where appropriate, assisted to ensure knowledge of how to access resources. Youth will be informed regarding financial assistance, including CFCIP or ETV Program funds, which may be available at the local level. Youth will also be informed about ongoing classes or events where they are welcomed and encouraged to participate. They will leave care with contact information for the IL Coordinator and any social workers or other significant people in child welfare system with whom the youth is familiar or may have developed positive relationships. If no such relationship exists, at a minimum, contact information for the IL Coordinator will still be provided in the event of future needs or crises.

- Provide room and board assistance for youth aging out of care that were in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays. Agencies may use up to 25% of their IL allocation for room and board payments for eligible youth.

**Room and board definition:** In accordance with the Chafee Act, only those youth in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays will be eligible for room and board assistance. Chafee funds may be utilized to provide financial assistance to eligible youth for the purpose of obtaining and establishing safe and stable housing. Room and board payments may be made to service providers, vendors, or youth to set up residence. Room and board may include security deposits, rent, furniture, utilities hook-up or payments, and other housing-related necessities. The county or tribe will assess individual youth's room and board needs and determine the level of room and board assistance that will be provided.

Emergency financial assistance for immediate shelter due to temporary, crisis situations will be available for all IL eligible youth and does not fall under the definition of room and board.

*F. Make available vouchers for post-secondary education and training for youths who have aged out of care.*

- Continue the development of Wisconsin's Education and Training Vouchers Program. Counties, tribes, and the Division of Juvenile Corrections will receive an annual allocation for the development and provision of local ETV Programs. Local agencies will ensure that IL eligible youth are informed about and have access to ETV Program assistance and funding. Each agency will have a policy and procedure for the administration of this program. ETV Program funds will be utilized only for post-secondary related activities and costs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to counties and tribes for the implementation and maintenance of the ETV Program. Regular technical assistance regarding ETV Program regulations, practices, policies, and procedures will be available for all counties and tribes. Meetings will be scheduled in all regions around the state to discuss program and practice issues and share information across agencies. A section for the ETV Program has been incorporated into the IL Basic Training curriculum and will be modified as needed for training sessions.
- Utilize ETV funding for scholarship awards for post-secondary tuition, fees, and books for eligible youth. The DCFS Scholarship Program will increase the level of funding available for scholarships to \$157,740 in 2005. Award payments will be made directly to the institution for the payment of tuition, fees, and books for each youth receiving a grant.
- Collect annual data and reports on the progress of local ETV Program efforts. Maintain data on the DCFS Scholarship Program funded with ETV Program funds.

*2. Describe how youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence are to be served.*

Independent living skills must be learned over the life span of the child, and foster parents are recognized as the primary trainers of IL skills for these youth. Helping youth gain skills necessary for self-sufficiency requires the involvement of foster parents, staff, classroom instructors, experiential training providers, life experiences, and ongoing support and safety nets.

Effective 2001, IL services are required for all Wisconsin youth in out-of-home care placement for at least six months after the age of 15 years. While youth are in OHC, independent living services must be available and offered to all eligible youth. Services may include one-on-one training that occurs in natural environments, classroom training, and experiential learning. Trainers of IL skills may include foster parents, IL Coordinators, school staff, mentors, family members, and training programs offered through other community resources, agencies, or contracted services. Local agencies may design their IL programs and services to address the needs of youth based on number of eligible youth and geographic resources and barriers.

IL services are designed to target those areas designated in the Chafee Act and other individualized youth needs as assessed and addressed in the ILTP. Although the availability and provision of IL services are required, youth participation in those services is voluntary. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following areas: daily living skills, secondary and post-secondary education, obtaining drivers licenses, awareness and accessing of resources, budgeting and financial management, vocational and employment counseling, housing assistance, health education, prevention of risky behaviors, and accessing medical and mental health services.

All of the described services are available for youth aged 15-20 years meeting the IL eligibility criteria.

**Barriers:** There are no statutory barriers negatively impacting IL programs. However, there are other barriers that are being evaluated to determine if mitigation is possible. These include:

- The lack of continued Medicaid eligibility and other health insurance programs for youth aged 18 and older leaving OHC placement.
- The reluctance of some local agencies to allow youth to participate in driver education and obtain their drivers licenses prior to exiting OHC placement.
- The lack of transitional living program residences in many areas of the state for youth exiting OHC placement.
- A reduction in CFCIP and ETV Program funding to serve an increasing number of older youth in and exiting OHC.
- A lack of sufficient funding that would enable every child welfare agency in Wisconsin to have an assigned, full time Independent Living Coordinator.

*3. Discuss how the State involves the public and private sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve self-sufficiency.*

During this past year, the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. This group was called the PEP Core Team and its purpose was to develop a Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) for child welfare services in Wisconsin. An extensive plan

was developed and finalized in 2004 and will be implemented over several years beginning in 2004.

The State also participates in meetings with the private and public sectors to focus on more specific issues pertaining to youth. The State IL Coordinator is a member of the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council that collaborates on mental health issues and services for youth transitioning to self-sufficiency. The coordinator also leads the Higher Education Opportunities for Youth Advisory Group to address the educational challenges and tackle post-secondary educational barriers faced by youth. Another collaborative group currently focusing on teen issues is the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, Committee on Children and Youth. Membership for all of these groups includes private and public sector professionals. Independent Living roundtables with county, tribal, and private agency service providers are also utilized to discuss and address current policy and practice issues for adolescent youth.

The State IL Coordinator also arranges meetings to address specific topics and areas of interest related to older youth issues. These meetings connect the statewide IL Coordinators with other community agencies to help each other learn, collaborate, and better serve older youth. Group participants may include the public and private sector staff in addition to youth, families, and foster parents.

*4. Describe in detail how public and private organizations were consulted and involved in the development of this part of the CFSP.*

As described previously, during this past year the State coordinated and facilitated regular meetings with county, tribal, private, and other state agencies and stakeholders to collaborate, plan, and improve critical services for children and families. This group was called the PEP Core Team and its purpose was to develop a Program Enhancement Plan for child welfare services in Wisconsin. An extensive plan was developed and finalized in 2004 and will be implemented over two years beginning in late 2004. The partnership will continue throughout plan implementation.

In addition, every county and tribal IL Coordinator, along with several private providers of IL services, were contacted directly to provide input for this five-year plan. All of their input is included throughout the various sections of the plan.

A Youth Advisory Council was created and began meeting in 2004. This group of youth aged 15-21 years is sharing their experiences in the child welfare system to positively influence and inform state planning and policy.

*5. Coordination with other Federal and State programs for youth and Indian tribes for Indian children.*

The DCFS coordinates with other programs for youth to ensure mutual awareness of programs and collaboration on the ongoing development and improvement of services for youth. The DCFS has a contract with the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) for IL eligible youth who are incarcerated. The DJC IL Coordinator participates in IL meetings to collaborate with child welfare agencies on services for former DJC youth. The Department of

Workforce Development (DWD) launched a pilot project in Milwaukee County to provide support and services for youth to gain education, training, and employment. Prior to project implementation, meetings were held with DCFS and BMCW staff to coordinate the involvement of foster care youth into the project and ongoing case management for those youth. The DCFS participates in the Mental Health Transition Advisory Council led by the Division of Disability and Elder Services to better serve youth with disabilities and mental health needs.

The DCFS and the Dept. of Health and Family Services' Tribal Affairs Unit (TAU) work with each other and the tribes to ensure tribes are involved and participate in all IL activities. Beginning in 2005, three Wisconsin Indian tribes including Lac Courte Oreilles will receive IL and ETV Program allocations to provide IL services to tribal youth. Tribal youth that are not members of these three tribes will receive IL services through the county agencies with which the tribe has agreements. Independent Living Work Plans are due to the State annually and must include assurances that all counties are collaborating with the tribes to identify and engage tribal youth in IL services and ensure appropriate and meaningful collaboration in the development of IL services for tribal youth. The plan must describe the steps taken to achieve effective IL services for tribal youth.

All tribes receive formal notification of IL program changes and issues via the state numbered and information memo system. In addition, IL Coordinators for the tribes receive all informal notices and surveys generated by the State IL Coordinator. These communications have proven to be an effective way to quickly obtain and share information about current IL practices and challenges, and obtain input on planning and activities.

*6. Expansion of Medicaid eligibility to youth ages 18-20 years who have aged out of foster care.*

The DCFS has requested since 2001 to extend Medicaid eligibility for youth aging out of out-of-home care as allowed under the Chafee Act, but the requests have not been approved through the state budget process due to significant budget constraints. Extensive efforts have been made by the Department's Office of Strategic Finance (OFS), Division of Health Care Finance (DHCF), and the DCFS to analyze the programmatic and fiscal impact of extending Medicaid eligibility. It was learned that in Wisconsin:

- Children in out-of-home care are eligible for Medical Assistance (MA) up to age 18. Wisconsin also provides MA coverage to youths, including youths living with their parents, up to age 19 under BadgerCare and Healthy Start. After reaching the age of 19 years, youth are no longer eligible for MA in Wisconsin, regardless of income, unless they are disabled, pregnant, or a caretaker of a minor relative.
- Approximately 300 teens age out of out-of-home care each year.
- Children and youth in out-of-home care have higher than average health care needs, particularly in the areas of mental health, chronic and recurrent diseases, and substance abuse. These needs, which continue and may intensify into adulthood, are unmet when the youth leave out-of-home care, turn 19, and lose MA. Youth who age out of the out-



of-home care program do not have the financial, social, or family resources other youth might have to obtain medical treatment.

- The cost of expanding MA benefit will depend on how the proposal is phased in. An option is to phase in the expansion by age cohort. Specifically, in the first year, youth 19 or younger would be MA eligible. This would include all youth who already exited out-of-home but meet the eligibility criteria of having been in care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the second year, youth 20 or younger would be eligible. Phasing in eligibility would reduce the additional state cost for the initial biennial budget period that the MA benefit is provided.
- Implementation of the extended MA eligibility would require one-time administrative costs to modify CARES and MMIS systems. Additional costs would be incurred for WiSACWIS changes to capture health insurance data on these youth who are no longer in the child welfare system. Proposed federal reporting requirements for outcomes of youth leaving out-of-home care have included provisions that would require the DCFS to track health insurance access for youth leaving out-of-home care.
- Statutory language changes would be required to implement the proposal

***Continuing Efforts to Expand Medicaid Benefits for Foster Care Youth:*** Under the Governor's KidsFirst plan, the Quality Foster Care and Adoption Initiatives will seek to achieve the extended coverage as allowed under the Chafee Act. Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle is committed to providing young adults with continuing health coverage under Medicaid until they reach 21 years of age.

#### *7. Determination of eligibility for benefits and services.*

To comply with the Chafee Act and address critical needs of older youth in out-of-home care, Wisconsin developed liberal eligibility criteria for independent living services. Agencies were notified of the criteria in DCFS Memo Series 2001-06. All youth in out-of-home care for at least six months after the age of 15 achieve eligibility for IL services. This also includes adopted youth that were in out-of-home care for the same amount of time and period prior to adoption. Youth retain eligibility for all supports and services until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays. These same youth that are enrolled in post-secondary education or training institutions on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays may receive additional ETV Program support up to age 23.

Because Wisconsin is a county-administered service system, counties and tribes may design and operate their IL programs as needed for local youth. Program differences may occur due to varied levels of funding, availability of caseworkers to focus on older youths' needs and services, and community resources available in the community and nearby. All programs must adhere to the State definition of IL eligibility for youth. All programs must address the identified needs and service areas described in the Chafee Act, the June 2000 *Independent Living for Youth in Out-of-Home Care* study, and State numbered and information memos regarding IL programs.

Youth participation in IL services is voluntary. Cases for youth that leave care prior to age 18 due to reunification may be closed for further IL services where the youth and family indicate there is no continued need for the service and/or they refuse to participate in the program.

All agencies must have IL services in place and be prepared to serve all youth up to 21 years who have achieved IL eligibility and up to 23 years for the ETV Program. Annual work plans indicate and verify that this is the case for all agencies contracting with the DCFS for IL services.

#### *8. Fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.*

Through implementation of Wisconsin's Program Enhancement Plan, the DCFS will organize review teams to monitor the performance of local agencies operating independent living programs. State-county contracts require those agencies to comply with all civil rights requirements applicable to federal funds. The DCFS collects information on independent living program activity and has regular meetings with local independent program coordinators to discuss program issues. The Department of Health and Family Services has regional offices that investigate complaints by clients regarding the services provided by local agencies.

The Wisconsin CFCIP has two major categories of benefits: the transitional housing room and board benefit and the scholarship program. Procedures are in place to ensure that program staff are aware of these benefits for youth and that all eligible youth are informed of these benefits and have an opportunity to request the assistance.

#### *9. Public Comments*

Prior to program implementation in 2001, the DCFS held public listening sessions and roundtable meetings with local agency staff to solicit comments on how CFCIP funds should be used. These comments were used in the development of the original CFCIP plan. The current plan has been modified to include input received from the PEP Core Team that developed the State Program Enhancement Plan to be implemented over the next several years.

In addition, Independent Living Coordinators for counties, tribes, the Division of Juvenile Corrections, the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare, and some private agencies were solicited directly for input into this plan. All of their comments were considered and included in its development.

## **Tribal Child Welfare Program**

For the past two years, DCFS staff and the Department Tribal Affairs Unit have been meeting bimonthly with representatives of the Indian Child Welfare departments of each of Wisconsin's eleven federally-recognized tribes. The purpose of these meetings is for the Department to obtain input on policies, procedures, and child welfare practices from tribal child welfare professionals. In conjunction with the Child and Family Services Review and the subsequent Program Enhancement Plan (PEP), tribal representatives have been involved through the PEP Core Team and through these bimonthly meetings. In addition to those tribal issues included in the PEP, this group has developed seven (7) tribal priorities, which were attached to, and thereby included in, the PEP. The Tribal Child Welfare Priorities are also attached to this plan.

The DCFS intends to continue meeting bimonthly with tribal child welfare staff to implement the seven priorities and to discuss and obtain input on other child welfare issues as they arise. For purposes of both the PEP and the CFSP, the DCFS has established an Implementation Team consisting of a wide variety of stakeholders within and outside of the child welfare system. Tribes will be represented on the Implementation Team.

The Program Enhancement Implementation Team will also manage six (6) Focus Committees. Tribal representatives will be included on five of the six committees. The sixth committee will focus exclusively on child welfare issues directly related to tribes and will essentially be comprised of the state and tribal staff identified above who meet bimonthly.

The DCFS is currently in the process of hiring several additional child welfare staff. One of these positions will be entitled Indian Child Welfare Consultant and will focus entirely on implementing the priorities and working with tribal child welfare agencies on the entire range of issues found in the child welfare program.

In addition to the significant effort identified above, DCFS staff will continue to work with Tribal Affairs Unit staff in establishing relationships with and providing technical assistance and consultation to tribal agencies to assure that tribal social services programs are seamlessly connected with their child welfare programs to better serve Indian families.

The Secretary of DHFS recently met with tribal leaders and will continue to do so. We are currently scheduling a meeting at which the Department Secretary, managers, and program staff will meet with tribal leaders and a wide range of tribal program staff to determine how the state and tribes can best assist each other in assuring that the needs of Indian families are met in the context of culturally appropriate services. It is our expectation that similar meetings will occur on an ongoing basis.

### *ICWA Compliance*

Specific strategies for improving implementation of ICWA are described in the Tribal Child Welfare Issues document attached to the plan.

## **VIII. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR FFY 2005 - 2009**

### **Services Related to Permanency Planning**

The DCFS has identified several activities that will be accomplished over the next five years that are designed to enhance and improve permanency planning practice and outcomes for children in terms of more rapid achievement of permanent placement and greater assurance that a permanent placement is, in fact, permanent for the child.

#### **A. Administrative rule**

The DCFS continues to develop an administrative rule which creates and codifies requirements related to reasonable efforts and permanency planning. This rule, which will be identified as Chapter HFS 44, Adm. Code, will

- identify those tasks and activities related to the scheduling and notification of permanency plan reviews (6-month reviews) and permanency plan hearings (12-month reviews)
- describe the determinations that must be made at every review or hearing
- describe the content of permanency plans and permanency plan summary reports

#### **B. Develop policies on the appropriate use of concurrent permanency planning**

While the administrative rule described above is in the promulgation process, the DCFS will issue a numbered memo regarding the timeliness and appropriate use of concurrent permanency planning and the establishment of a concurrent permanence goal. This memo will require that a concurrent permanence goal be established in preparation for the first permanency plan review to be held following the child's removal from his or her home. The DCFS will also provide or arrange for training on this information for county, state, and private agency staff, permanency plan review panel members, judges, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel, and other affected individuals.

#### **C. Information for permanency plan review panel members**

The DCFS will develop informational materials for use by review panel members that will clearly describe the role and function of the panel, the specific determinations that the panel must make at each review, and the type of training that must be provided to panel members. This latter activity will include the DCFS reviewing materials developed by the National Association of Foster Care Reviewers.

#### **D. Develop policies related to visitation/family interaction**

At the present time, Wisconsin does not have adequate policies related to the purpose of visitation and family interaction, the need to develop and implement comprehensive plans related to visitation, incorporation of visitation plans into court orders and permanency plans, and under what conditions visitation plans can be adapted. The DCFS will develop policies related to these issues to assure statewide uniformity and will provide training for county, state, and private agency staff on the information developed. Information on visitation and family interaction will also be included in materials to be provided to the parents of children removed from their homes.

This process will also ensure that all of the requirements of the Indian Child Welfare Act are fully integrated into our policies.

E. Develop policies related to locating and involving relatives of children removed from their homes

Current Wisconsin statutes and regulations are inadequate and unclear regarding the efforts that must be undertaken to determine paternity, seek acknowledgement of paternity in Indian Child Welfare Cases, locate and involve relatives of both custodial and non-custodial parents, share information with potential relative caregivers, and other topics related to enhancing our efforts to achieve permanence for children through the use of relative placements. This will be a multifaceted approach that will involve proposing statutory change, developing administrative rules, revising child welfare standards, issuing numbered memos, and providing or arranging for training for all actors in the child welfare system. It will also involve reviewing and, as necessary, improving the operation and awareness of our paternal interest registry. Some of this activity may take place through what is currently a proposed legislative study committee on issues related to adoption and other permanency planning issues. We have advocated that any such study committee also include the issues described above.

F. Enhance county capacity to move cases to permanence

In many counties in Wisconsin, particularly smaller, more rural counties, District Attorneys and Corporation Counsel often find that the time and expertise required to pursue terminations of parental rights and other legal actions related to permanence are not available. This can result in children not moving to permanence within acceptable time frames. This is frustrating to county child welfare agencies that have exhausted their available efforts and cannot proceed without court action. Two years ago, Wisconsin initiated a program under which legal services could be enhanced through the use of Title IV-E funds. Presently, approximately fifteen (15) counties are making use of this program. It is our goal to increase the number of counties that benefit from this program. The primary hindrance to this is counties being able to identify sufficient amounts of match dollars to draw down the IV-E funds. We are proposing to assist counties in that effort.

## **Diligent Recruitment**

Over the next 5 years, more emphasis will be placed on recruitment of families to meet the needs of the children in care. Special emphasis will be placed on targeted recruitment. The DCFS is currently working with AdoptUSKids as a pilot state to address recruitment needs. The DCFS will be doing benchmarking initially in the areas of Indian family recruitment and recruitment of families willing to accept sibling groups of 3 or more children and may move into other targeted ethnic areas of need. AdoptUSKids has been in Wisconsin two days already this year and the DCFS plans to have them back several more days during the year. While recruitment was not identified as an area needing improvement in the CFSR, the DCFS believes it is an area where Wisconsin can do better.

### *Wisconsin Statewide Recruitment Goals*

In collaboration with counties and tribes, the DCFS will work to develop a pool of waiting families to meet the diverse needs of children in OHC.

- Wisconsin will develop a consistent and ongoing recruitment campaign.
  - Continue to improve our information and reporting system to enable us to make program improvement decisions based upon current and accurate data concerning family recruitment and retention.
3. Implement a well-respected and effective permanency consultation program to work with counties, tribes, and private agencies. Collaborate with counties, tribes, and private agencies to identify relatives, especially paternal relatives.
    - Increase competency of permanency consultation workers.
    - Provide training to counties, tribes, and private agencies concerning the role of permanency consultants.
    - Develop/build relationships with county and tribal agencies.
    - Increase retention of foster and adoptive families.
    - Identify needed resources for recruitment.
  4. Ensure quality training to achieve permanency and well being for children in OHC.
    - Include both foster and foster/adoptive parents.
    - Ensure consistent and ongoing training for all staff to assure uniform understanding.
    - Implement foster care coordinator training.
    - Implement training for ongoing caseworkers to help them understand placement issues.
    - Combine the foster family and adoptive family assessments into one document to eliminate the need to complete two separate documents for a foster home conversion.

### *State Recruitment Strategies*

The DCFS will work collaboratively with foster and adoptive parents, counties, tribes, and private agencies to increase support services and training to all partners in the foster care and adoption programs through the development of a Foster Care Resource Center. In addition, the DCFS will:

- Provide support and training to tribes and private agencies to improve the community and cultural responsiveness of their recruitment and retention, including access to services (e.g., Medical Assistance)
- Develop a coordinated ongoing recruitment and retention campaign
- Develop policies and procedures to increase the identification of relatives, especially paternal relatives, and to ensure siblings are placed together when appropriate
- Develop a mechanism/system to accurately track and evaluate data concerning recruitment and retention of resource families

### **Transfers of Children to Juvenile Justice**

The CAPTA Amendments of 2003 require states, to the extent possible, to collect information on children in the custody of child welfare (i.e. child protective services) agencies who are transferred to the custody of juvenile justice agencies. Federal guidance has not been provided regarding the specific information needed to meet this requirement.

The WiSACWIS system is used to track all placements of children in out-of-home placements subject to federal permanency planning requirements. For children placed in out-of-home care for child welfare reasons (under Chapter 48, the Children's Code) who are subsequently

adjudicated delinquent or a juvenile in need of protection or services (under Chapter 938, the Juvenile Justice Code), the legal status window in WiSACWIS can be used to record the change in legal status. However, since the DCFS does not manage the Wisconsin juvenile justice program, counties are not required to use WiSACWIS to track all juvenile justice placements. Thus it may not be possible to identify all transfers of custody from child protective services to juvenile justice.

While Wisconsin will continue to study the potential to collect this information, specific data collection steps will not be implemented until federal guidance has been provided.

### **Child Welfare Demonstration Projects**

The DCFS submitted a federal IV-E waiver request for a Subsidized Guardianship program in January 2004 that is pending federal approval. Federal approval of the Guardianship waiver is expected in 2004 with the ability to implement the waiver beginning in 2005. The waiver will be implemented over a five-year period as a demonstration project, with the terms and conditions requiring an independent evaluation of the program and federal cost neutrality.

Implementation of the subsidized guardianship program is contingent on enabling state legislation. Legislation was introduced in the 2004 legislative session – Senate Bill 688 – and the legislation will be introduced again in the 2005 legislative session. The DCFS is hopeful that the legislation can be passed in Spring 2005 so the program can be implemented by Summer 2005.

The subsidized guardianship program will be limited to children in licensed foster care and is targeted at children who are placed with relatives on a long-term basis. The guardianship subsidy payment will make legal guardianship a more viable permanency outcome for the target population. The program will initially be implemented in Milwaukee County, with the potential to expand.

## **Kinship Care Program**

The TANF Kinship Care payment for eligible children and relative caregivers remains at \$215 per child per month. This amount has not been changed since the Kinship Care program was created in 1997. During the 2005-2009 period, efforts will continue to assess this rate and determine if an increase in the payment is possible.

In addition, two policy issues have been identified and targeted to improve Kinship Care services. The issues are included in proposed legislation and are as follows:

1. Revising the definition of a Kinship Care relative to include language stating that a relative to one of the children is a potentially eligible relative caregiver to all of the children in that sibling group. By identifying the potential caregiver as an eligible relative, Kinship Care for all of the children could be approved which is not possible under current legislation. This proposed change achieves the desired outcome of keeping sibling groups together and supporting familial relationships for children at risk.
2. Ensuring that relatives requesting Kinship Care are entitled to receive an application form and are allowed to participate in eligibility processing for the program. Currently in areas where there are shortages of Kinship Care funding, waiting lists, higher numbers of voluntary cases, etc., agencies may limit or refuse applications to inquiring relatives. Consequently, children and relatives that may be eligible for Kinship Care payments are denied access to financial assistance and the potentially eligible Kinship Care population in each tribe or county is not identified and remains under-represented by the data. This directly impacts children, families and the local agencies' allocations for Kinship Care, which are estimated using the eligible population in each community.



## **X. FISCAL INFORMATION FOR CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN**

This section of the plan includes information on state maintenance of effort as required under Title IV-B and proposed budgets for the FFY 2005 Title IV-B Subparts I and II, CAPTA, and Chafee CFCIP and ETV funds.

### **Maintenance of Effort for Children and Family Services Programs**

Services to children and families are provided in Wisconsin primarily through county human or social service agencies. Counties typically have unified human service departments that are responsible for a broad range of state-mandated services. Tribes also operate human service programs and receive state funds for those services.

The primary method of funding children and family services is through the Community Aids program. Under Community Aids, an allocation that includes IV-B Subpart I funds, state tax dollars, and other funding sources goes to county and tribal human service agencies. IV-B Subpart II and Chafee funds are allocated to counties and tribes separately. In addition, counties and tribes provide funds from local sources to match the state allocation and provide additional services.

The Department's Human Services Reporting System (HSRS) provides information on counts of human service clients and counties submit expenditure reports – the "942" and "943" reports -- that allow expenditures to be matched with client counts. This information is used as the basis for Social Services Block Grant reporting and is also used for maintenance of effort reporting for Title IV-B. The following table summarizes the county expenditures for CY 2002.

COUNTY SPENDING ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES (All Funds)—CY 2002

<b>Funding Categories</b>	<b>Abused &amp; Neglected Children</b>	<b>Children &amp; Family Services</b>
Child Day Care *	\$ 1,337,031	\$2,272,349
Supportive Home Care	0	172,601
Specialized Transportation	1,437,007	174,507
Comm. Prevention Access & Outreach	4,450,484	7,465,674
Community Living/Support Services	23,501,941	15,851,568
Investigations and Assessments	58,384,062	7,603,455
Work Related & Day Services	261,682	1,796,905
Community Residential Services	73,510,054	11,557,346
Community Treatment Services	18,622,386	7,927,771
Inpatient & Institutional Care	17,257,723	3,945,416
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$198,762,370</b>	<b>\$58,767,592</b>
Clients Served (unduplicated count) **	37,931	33,739

\* Child care for work or training using TANF or Child Care Block Grant funds is not included. The childcare expenditures reflect primarily crisis/respite child care.

\*\* Client counts do not reflect client activities reported in WiSACWIS system.

These services are available statewide through county social and human services agencies and are targeted to families who come to the attention of the agency through child abuse and neglect reports, referrals from other agencies, or self-referrals for assistance. These figures do not include services provided to children and families in other target groups, such as developmentally disabled or emotionally disturbed.

Services are also provided through direct contracts between vendor agencies and the Department. Service categories, funding amounts, geographic distribution, and target groups are summarized in the following table.

Wisconsin has maintained or increased the state funding available to counties for child welfare and other family support services. In addition, the state has placed a maintenance-of-effort requirement on counties for programs for which the state provides funding that is enforced through contract requirements and program monitoring.

The following are other programs that serve the target population for the Title IV-B program and contribute to the state maintenance of effort.

#### OTHER CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAMS

<b>Program</b>	<b>Category of Service</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Geographic Distribution</b>	<b>Target group</b>
Brighter Futures (BFI)	BFI is a comprehensive prevention initiative to improve outcomes for youth	1.8 million	9 counties including Milwaukee	High risk youth, including pregnant and parenting teens
State Incentive Grant	Evidence-based AODA prevention services.	3 million	17 counties and tribes	Youth age 12 - 17 years.
Community Services Block Grant	Multiple, geographically based low-income programs	7,773,000	69 counties statewide/11 Tribes	Low-income individuals and families
Adoption Information Center	Prevention/ Support Services	75,000	Statewide service	General public
Adoption Exchange	Prevention/ Support Services	166,000	Statewide service	Prospective adoptive families

Wisconsin also funds family support services through programs administered by the Children's Trust Fund (Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board). Those programs are summarized below.

#### CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND PROGRAMS

<b>Program</b>	<b>Category of Service</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Geographic Distribution</b>	<b>Target group</b>
Family Resource Programs	Prevention/ Support Services	\$1,040,000	13 programs in 12 counties (2 in Milwaukee)	Parents and their children birth to age 3
Access & Visitation	Support & Visitation Resources	\$147,846	8 Programs in 8 Counties	Children and non-custodial parents, primarily fathers
Right From the Start	Prevention/ Support Services	320,000	4 programs in 4 counties	Parents and their children birth to age 3
CAN Prevention Grants	Prevention/ Support Services	420,000	21 programs in all regions of the state	Varies with program

#### State Match Requirements

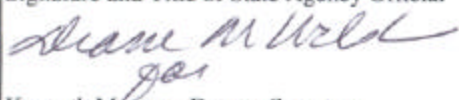
The Title IV-B program requires a 25% state match for Subpart I and II funds. The Chafee program requires a 20% match for CCFCIP and ETV funds. No match is required for CAPTA funds.

The state match for Title IV-B and Chafee is described in the following budget sheets.

#### CFS - 101 Forms

The CFS-101 Form, parts 1 and 2, are included with the plan.

**CFS-101, Part I: Annual Budget Request For Title IV-B, Subpart 1 & 2 Funds, CAPTA, and  
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program  
Fiscal Year 2005, October 1, 2004 through September 30, 2005**

1.. State: WISCONSIN		2. EIN: 39-600-0469	
3. Address: Dept. of Health and Family Services P.O. Box 8916 Madison, WI 53708-8916		4. Submission: [X] New [] Revision	
5. Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 1 Funds (25% State match required).		\$5,396,395 (\$1,798,798 match)	
6. Total Estimated Title IV-B, Subpart 2 Funds. (This amount should equal the sum of lines a - f.) (25% State match required.)		\$4,995,907 (\$1,652,000 match)	
a) Total Family Preservation Services.		\$991,181	
b) Total Family Support Services.		\$991,181	
c) Total Time-Limited Family Reunification Services.		\$991,181	
d) Total Adoption Promotion and Support Services.		\$991,181	
e) Total for Other Service Related Activities (e.g. planning).		\$729,907	
f) Total Administration (not to exceed 10% of estimated allotment).		\$261,276	
7. Re-allotment of Title IV-B, Subpart 2 funds for States (25% State match required). a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program. <b>N/A - Wisconsin will use all Subpart 2 funds.</b> b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting. <b>Wisconsin will accept additional Subpart 2 funds if funds are available.</b>			
8. Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Basic State Grant Only (no State match required) Estimated CAPTA BSG Amount <b>\$394,506</b> plus additional allocation, as available. <b>Wisconsin will accept additional CAPTA funds if funds are available.</b>			
9. Estimated Chafee Program Funds (20% State match required).			
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)		\$1,954,768 (\$488,692 match)	
Chafee Education and Training Vouchers.		\$637,913 (\$159,478 match)	
10. Re-allotment of CFCIP Funds (20% State match required). a) Indicate the amount of the State's allotment that will not be required to carry out CFCIP <b>N/A - Wisconsin will use all CFCIP funds.</b> b) If additional funds become available to States, specify the amount of additional funds the State is requesting <b>Wisconsin will accept additional CFCIP funds if funds are available.</b>			
11. Certification by State Agency and/or Indian Tribal Organization.  The State Agency submits the above estimates and request for funds under title IV-B, subpart 1 and/or 2, of the Social Security Act, CAPTA BSG and CFCIP, and agrees that expenditures will be made in accordance with the Child and Family Services Plan, which has been jointly developed with, and approved by, the ACF Regional Office, for the Fiscal Year ending September 30.			
Signature and Title of State Agency Official  Kenneth Munson, Deputy Secretary		Signature and Title of Regional Office Official	
Date June 30, 2004		Date	

**CFS-101, PART II: ANNUAL SUMMARY OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

OMB APPROVAL # 0980-0047

State WISCONSIN For FFY 2005, OCTOBER 1, 2004 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2005

											(k) NUMBER TO BE SERVED [X] Families [ ]Individuals	(l) POP. TO BE SERVED	(m) GEOG. AREA TO BE SERVED
SERVICES/ACTIVITIES	TITLE IV-B		(c) CAPTA*	(d) CFCIP ETV*	(e) TITLE IV-E	(f) TITLE XX (SSBG)	(g) TITLE IV-A TANF	(h) Title XIX (Medicaid)	(i) Other Fed Prog	(j) State Local Donated Funds	100,000	Varies with Program	Statewide
	(a) I-CWS	(b) II-PSSF											
1) PREVENTION & SUPPORT SERVICES (FAMILY SUPPORT)	805	991				1,770			4,160	23,000	40,000	Reports of abuse/neglect	Statewide/ Reservation
2) PROTECTIVE SERVICES	1,299					560				21,200			
3) CRISIS INTERVENTION (FAMILY PRESERVATION)		991				1,730			1,000	4,200			
(A) PREPLACEMENT PREVENTION (Other SSF) **	2,080	720					7,000			24,100	10,000	All Children in foster care	Statewide/ Reservation
(B)REUNIFICATION SERVICES	1,002					590				8,000			
4. TIME-LIMITED FAMILY REUNIFICATION		991								20,000			
5. ADOPTION PROMOTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES		991								30,500		All eligible children	Statewide/ Reservation
6) FOSTER CARE MAINTENANCE: (A) FOSTER FAMILY & RELATIVE FOSTER CARE					19,150						4,200		
(B) GROUP/INST CARE					5,900						300		Statewide/ Reservation
7) ADOPTION SUBSIDY PMTS.					2,333						3,400		
8) INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES ***				2,364									
9) ADMIN & MGMT	210	261	117	228	208								
10) STAFF TRAINING			277										
11) FOSTER PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING					590								
12) ADOPTIVE PARENT RECRUITMENT & TRAINING					83								
13) CHILD CARE RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT TRAINING									70,000	25,000	60,000	Low Income Families	
14) TOTAL	5,396	4,995	394	2,592	28,264	4,650	7,000		75,160	156,000			

\* State only, Indian Tribes are not required to include information on these programs.

\*\* The other services portion of IV-B Part II is shown under pre-placement prevention.

\*\*\* The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers is shown under Independent Living Services

**Title IV-B, Subpart 1 - Child Welfare Program Services  
Proposed FFY 2005 Budget**

<b>Administration</b>	
Program Staff	
Staff salaries (3.0 FTE)	\$ 143,680
Fringe (36%)	51,725
Supplies and Services	3,337
Indirect (8.3% of salary for 2.5 FTE) (4.9% of salary for 0.5 FTE)	11,143
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>	<b>\$ 209,925</b>
<b>Program Services</b>	
Community Aids Allocations	\$ 3,711,139
Allocated to counties and tribes	
Youth Aids	1,041,234
Allocated to counties	
Runaway Program	434,097
Allocated to local programs	
<b>Subtotal Program Services</b>	<b>\$ 5,186,470</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 5,396,395</b>

Sources of match:

- County and tribal expenditures of state funds provided through the Community Aids, Youth Aids and Children and Families Incentive programs and expenditures of local tax levy funds for child welfare services.

Note: The proposed FFY 2005 budget is based on the final FFY 2004 grant award.

**Title IV-B, Subpart II - Family Preservation and Support Services Budget  
Proposed FFY 2005 Budget**

<b>Administration</b>		
Program Staff (1 FTE)		
Salary		\$ 57,000
Fringe (36%)		20,520
Tribal Training Manager		68,000
Other Supplies and Services		111,025
Indirect (8.3% of salary)		4,731
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>		<b>\$ 261,276</b>
<b>Program Services</b>		
Family Preservation (20%)		\$ 991,181
To local agency SSF programs		
Family Support (20%)		991,181
To local agency SSF programs		
Time-Limited Reunification (20%)		991,181
To local agency SSF programs		
Adoptions (20%)		991,181
To state adoption program services		
Other Service Related (*)		729,607
BMCW Network Services	66,800	
Coordinated Service Teams	100,000	
POCAN Technical Assistance	160,000	
Local Agency PSSF Programs	403,107	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$ 4,684,331</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 4,955,907</b>

\* These funds are used by local agencies for Family Preservation, Family Support or Time-Limited Reunification services.

The proposed FFY 2005 budget is based on the final FFY 2004 award, including the mandatory and discretionary portions of the IV-B Subpart II award..



**IV-B Subpart II - Promoting Safe and Stable Families  
State Match Calculation**

	<b>IV-B Funds</b>	<b>State Match</b>	<b>Total Program</b>
Family Preservation	\$ 991,181	\$ 330,400	\$ 1,321,581
Family Support	991,181	330,400	1,321,581
Reunification	991,181	330,400	1,321,581
Adoption	991,181	330,400	1,321,581
Other Services	719,607	330,400	1,050,007
Subtotal, Program Services	4,694,631	1,652,000	6,246,631
State Administration	261,276	N/A	261,276
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,995,907</b>	<b>\$1,652,000</b>	<b>\$ 6,607,907</b>

Notes on State Match:

1. The majority of IV-B funds are allocated to counties and tribes to operate the family support, preservation and reunification portions of the program. Counties and tribes are also allocated funds for other activities with the requirement that these funds be used for the family support, preservation and reunification activities. Local program administration is limited to 10% of the local allocation and included in the Other Services category. Expenditures used as match are made by counties agencies using state funds provided through the Community Aids and Children and Families Incentive programs along with local tax levy funds. The estimated match amounts are based on local agency expenditures as reported to the DCFS. The actual amount of local agency expenditures exceeds the minimum match required for the Subpart II program.
2. The IV-B funds for adoption program services are used in conjunction with state funds and adoption incentive funds. The estimated match for the adoption services portion of the Subpart II program is based on local agency expenditures for post-adoption services provided to families adopting special needs children.
3. The other services category includes funds allocated to local agencies, either as part of the PSSF program or for programs such as BMCW Network Services, Coordinated Service Team development and POCAN training and technical assistance services. The estimated match for other services consists of local agency expenditures for family support, preservation and reunification services or local agency expenditures for the specific projects such as Coordinated Service Teams or POCAN.
4. No state match is provided for state administration. The match amounts for other Subpart II program components are calculated based on the total state match needed for the program.

**Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act  
Proposed FFY 2005 Budget**

<b>Administration</b>	
Program Staff (1 FTE)	
Salary	\$ 50,800
Fringe (36%)	18,288
Supplies and Services	45,540
Indirect (8.3% of salary)	4,216
<b>Subtotal Administration</b>	<b>\$ 118,844</b>
<b>Program Services</b>	
Training and technical assistance	\$ 275,662
<b>Subtotal Program Services</b>	<b>\$ 275,662</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 394,506</b>

Note: The projected FFY 2005 budget is based on the final FFY 2004 grant award.

**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)  
Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program**

**Proposed FFY 2005 Budget**

	<b>CFCIP</b>	<b>ETV</b>
<b>Federal Award</b>	\$ 1,954,768	\$ 637,913
<b>State Administration</b>		
Salary (2.1 FTE)	92,934	
Fringe 40%	37,174	
Supplies and Services	28,525	15,000
Internal Services	37,400	10,000
Conferences	11,700	
Indirect (8.3% of salary)	7,714	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>215,447</b>	<b>25,000</b>
<b>Local Services</b>		
Grants to Counties/BMCW	1,611,225	447,082
Allocations to Tribes	39,180	5,580
Div of Juvenile Corrections	30,655	2,511
Chapin Hall Evaluation	58,261	
Scholarship Program		157,740
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,739,321</b>	<b>612,913</b>
<b>Total Program</b>	<b>1,954,768</b>	<b>637,913</b>
<b>State/Local Match (20)%</b>	<b>485,663</b>	<b>159,478</b>
<b>Total Program Funding</b>	<b>\$ 2,428,315</b>	<b>\$ 797,391</b>

Sources of match:

- County and tribal program expenditures for independent living (CFCIP) and education and training voucher (ETV) activities
- Division of Juvenile Corrections expenditures for independent living and ETV activities
- Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare expenditures for independent living and ETV activities

Note: The proposed FFY 2005 budgets are based on the final FFY 2004 awards.

## **XI. ASSURANCES**

The Department, on behalf of the Governor, must provide assurances that Wisconsin is in compliance with federal requires for Title IV-B, CAPTA, and Chafee. The assurances are included in this section of the plan.

The following assurances are included:

- IV-B

- CAPTA

- Chafee CFCIP

- Chafee ETV

## **TITLE IV-B CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

The assurances listed below are in 45 CFR 1357.15(c) and title IV-B sections 422(b)(10), 422(b)(12), section 422 (b) (14), section 432(a)(4), 432 (a)(7) and 432(a)(9). These assurances will remain in effect during the period of the current five-year CFSP.

1. The State assures that it will participate in any evaluations the Secretary of HHS may require.
2. The State assures that it will administer the CFSP in accordance with methods determined by the Secretary to be proper and efficient.
3. The State assures that it has a plan for the training and use of paid paraprofessional staff, with particular emphasis on the full-time or part-time employment of low-income persons, as community service aides; and a plan for the use of non-paid or partially paid volunteers in providing services and in assisting any advisory committees established by the State.
4. The State assures that standards and requirements imposed with respect to child care under title XX shall apply with respect to day care services, if provided under the CFSP, except insofar as eligibility for such services is involved.
5. the State assures that it is operating, to the satisfaction of the Secretary:
  - a statewide information system from which can be readily determined the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or, within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care;
  - a case review system (as defined in section 475(5) for each child receiving foster care under the supervision of the State;
  - a service program designed to help children—where safe and appropriate, return to families from which they have been removed; or be placed for adoption, with a legal guardian, or, if adoption or legal guardianship is determined not to be appropriate for a child, in some other planned, permanent living arrangement; and
  - a pre-placement preventive services program designed to help children at risk of foster care placement remain safely with their families; and
  - The State assures that it has implemented policies and administrative and judicial procedures for children abandoned at or shortly after birth that are necessary to enable permanent decisions to be made expeditiously with respect to the placement of such children.
6. The State assures that plans will be developed for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

7. The State assures that it will collect and report information on children who are adopted from other countries and who enter State custody as a result of the disruption of an adoptive placement, or the dissolution of an adoption. Such information will include the reasons for disruption or dissolution, the agencies who handled the placement or adoption, the plans for the child, and the number of children to whom this pertains.
8. The State assures that no more than 10 percent of expenditures under the plan for any fiscal year with respect to which the State is eligible for payment under section 434 of the Act for the fiscal year shall be for administrative costs and that the remaining expenditures shall be for programs of family preservation services, community-based family support services, time-limited reunification services and adoption promotion and support services, with significant portions of such expenditures for each such program.
9. The State assures that Federal funds provided to the State for title IV-B, Subpart 2 programs will not be used to supplant Federal or non-Federal funds for existing services and activities.
10. The State assures that, in administering and conducting service programs under this plan, the safety of the children to be served shall be of paramount concern.

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by *Kenneth Munson* for \_\_\_\_\_ Date: *6/22/2004*  
Kenneth Munson

Title: Deputy Secretary  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **CAPTA ASSURANCES FOR CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PROGRAM**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is enforcing a State law, or has in effect and is operating a Statewide program, relating to child abuse and neglect which includes:

- 1) provisions or procedures for reporting known or suspected instances of child abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(i));
- 2) policies and procedures (including appropriate referrals to child protection service systems and for other appropriate services) to address the needs of infants born and identified as affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure, including a requirement that health care providers involved in the delivery or care of such infants notify the child protective services system of the occurrence of such condition in such infants (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ii));
- 3) the development of a plan of safe care for the infant born and identified as being affected by illegal substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iii));
- 4) procedures for the immediate screening, risk and safety assessment, and prompt investigation of such reports (section 106(b)(2)(A)(iv));
- 5) triage procedures for the appropriate referral of a child not at risk of imminent harm to a community organization or voluntary preventive service (section 106(b)(2)(A)(v));
- 6) procedures for immediate steps to be taken to ensure and protect the safety of the abused or neglected child, and of any other child under the same care who may also be in danger of abuse or neglect; and ensuring their placement in a safe environment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vi));
- 7) provisions for immunity from prosecution under State and local laws and regulations for individuals making good faith reports of suspected or known instances of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(vii));
- 8) methods to preserve the confidentiality of all records in order to protect the rights of the child and of the child's parents or guardians, including requirements ensuring that reports and records made and maintained pursuant to the purposes of CAPTA shall only be made available to--
  - a) individuals who are the subject of the report;
  - b) Federal, State, or local government entities, or any agent of such entities, as described in number 9 below;
  - c) child abuse citizen review panels;
  - d) child fatality review panels;

- e) a grand jury or court, upon a finding that information in the record is necessary for the determination of an issue before the court or grand jury; and
  - f) other entities or classes of individuals statutorily authorized by the State to receive such information pursuant to a legitimate State purpose (section 106(b)(2)(A)(viii);
- 9) provisions to require a State to disclose confidential information to any Federal, State, or local government entity, or any agent of such entity, that has a need for such information in order to carry out its responsibility under law to protect children from abuse and neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(ix));
- 10) provisions which allow for public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality (section 106(b)(2)(A)(x));
- 11) the cooperation of State law enforcement officials, court of competent jurisdiction, and appropriate State agencies providing human services in the investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of child abuse or neglect (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xi));
- 12) provisions requiring, and procedures in place that facilitate the prompt expungement of any records that are accessible to the general public or are used for purposes of employment or other background checks in cases determined to be unsubstantiated or false, except that nothing in this section shall prevent State child protective services agencies from keeping information on unsubstantiated reports in their casework files to assist in future risk and safety assessment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xii));
- 13) provisions and procedures requiring that in every case involving an abused or neglected child which results in a judicial proceeding, a guardian ad litem, who has received training appropriate to the role, and who may be an attorney or a court appointed special advocate who has received training appropriate to that role (or both), shall be appointed to represent the child in such proceedings—
- (a) to obtain firsthand, a clear understanding of the situation and needs of the child; and
  - (b) to make recommendations to the court concerning the best interests of the child (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiii));
- 14) the establishment of citizen review panels in accordance with subsection 106(c) (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xiv));
- 15) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms –
- (a) for the expedited termination of parental rights in the case of any infant determined to be abandoned under State law; and
  - (b) by which individuals who disagree with an official finding of abuse or neglect can appeal such finding (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xv));



- 16) provisions, procedures, and mechanisms that assure that the State does not require reunification of a surviving child with a parent who has been found by a court of competent jurisdiction--
- a) to have committed a murder (which would have been an offense under section 1111(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
  - b) to have committed voluntary manslaughter (which would have been an offense under section 1112(a) of title 18, United States Code, if the offense had occurred in the special maritime or territorial jurisdiction of the United States) of another child or such parent;
  - c) to have aided or abetted, attempted, conspired, or solicited to commit such murder or voluntary manslaughter; or
  - d) to have committed a felony assault that results in the serious bodily injury to the surviving child or another child of such parent (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvi));
- 17) provisions that assure that, upon the implementation by the State of the provisions, procedures, and mechanisms under number 16 above, conviction of any one of the felonies listed in number 16 above constitute grounds under State law for the termination of parental rights of the convicted parent as to the surviving children (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xvii));
- 18) provisions and procedures to require that a representative of the child protective services agency shall, at the initial time of contact with the individual subject to a child abuse and neglect investigation, advise the individual of the complaints or allegations made against the individual, in a manner that is consistent with laws protecting the rights of the reporter (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xviii));
- 19) provisions addressing the training of representatives of the child protective services system regarding the legal duties of the representatives, which may consist of various methods of informing such representatives of such duties, in order to protect the legal rights and safety of children and families from the initial time of contact during investigation through treatment (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xix));
- 20) provisions and procedures for improving the training, retention and supervision of caseworkers (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xx));
- 21) provisions and procedures for referral of a child under the age of 3 who is involved in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect to early intervention services funded under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxi));
- 22) **not later than June 25, 2005 (2 years after the enactment of Public Law 108-36)**, provisions and procedures for requiring criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relatives residing in the household (section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii));

- I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Title: Deputy Secretary  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM ASSURANCES**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions to effectively implement the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program are in place:

1. The State will provide assistance and services to youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(A)];
2. Not more than 30 percent of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment for a fiscal year will be expended for room and board for youth who have left foster care because they have attained 18 years of age, and have not attained 21 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(B)];
3. None of the amounts paid to the State from its allotment will be expended for room or board for any child who has not attained 18 years of age [Section 477(b)(3)(C)];
4. The State will use training funds provided under the program of Federal payments for foster care and adoption assistance to provide training to help foster parents, adoptive parents, workers in group homes, and case managers understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and will, to the extent possible, coordinate such training with the independent living program conducted for adolescents [Section 477(b)(3)(D)];
5. The State will adequately prepare prospective foster parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide for the needs of the child before a child, under the supervision of the State, is placed with prospective foster parents and that such preparation will be continued, as necessary, after the placement of the child. [Section 471(a), as amended];
6. The State has consulted widely with public and private organizations in developing the plan and has given all interested members of the public at least 30 days to submit comments on the plan [Section 477(b)(3)(E)];
7. The State will make every effort to coordinate the State programs receiving funds provided from an allotment made to the State under subsection (c) with other Federal and State programs for youth (especially transitional living youth projects funded under part B of title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974); abstinence education programs, local housing programs, programs for disabled youth (especially sheltered workshops), and school-to-work programs offered by high schools or local workforce agencies [Section 477(b)(3)(F)];

- I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Title: Deputy Secretary  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services


(ACF Regional Representative)

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER PROGRAM ASSURANCES**  
**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

On behalf of the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Wisconsin, I certify that the State has in effect and is operating a Statewide program relating to Foster Care Independent Living and that the following provisions will be implemented as of September 30, 2003:

1. The State will comply with the conditions specified in subsection 477(i).
2. The State has described methods it will use to:
  - ensure that the total amount of educational assistance to a youth under this and any other Federal assistance program does not exceed the total cost of attendance; and
  - avoid duplication of benefits under this and any other Federal assistance program, as defined in section 477(3)(b)(J).

I hereby certify that the State of Wisconsin complies with the requirements of the above assurances.

Certified by  for \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 6/22/2004  
Kenneth Munson

Title: Deputy Secretary  
Agency: Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(ACF Regional Representative)

## **PLAN ATTACHMENTS**

### Attached Documents

The following documents referenced in the narrative of the plan are attached.

1. DHFS Organizational Chart
2. DCFS Organizational Chart
3. Adoption Program Report for 2003
4. Adoption Disruption Data Collection Forms
5. MEPA Information
  - 5.A Letter on child assessment forms
  - 5.B Process for use of forms
  - 5.C Individualized child assessment form
  - 5.D Adoptive placement selection
  - 5.E Placement decision making assessment
6. Citizen Review Panel Annual Reports
  - 6.A Marathon County
  - 6.B LaCrosse County
  - 6.C Outagamie County
7. Tribal Child Welfare Issues
8. BMCW Janine B. Settlement Agreement Corrective Action Plan for Period 1

### Web Site References

The plan references web sites for other information. These web sites include:

The Wisconsin PEP can be found at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/cwreview/cfsr/PEP.htm>.

The Kids First agenda can be found at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docs/kidsfirst.pdf>.

Statutory language for CAPTA can be found at <http://folio.legis.state.wi.us/quickfind.html>

Note: To use the Folio on-line statutes select Chapter 48 Children's Code and enter in the appropriate statute number.

# Department of Health and Family Services Functions

December 2003

[Click here to see chart of supervisors](#)

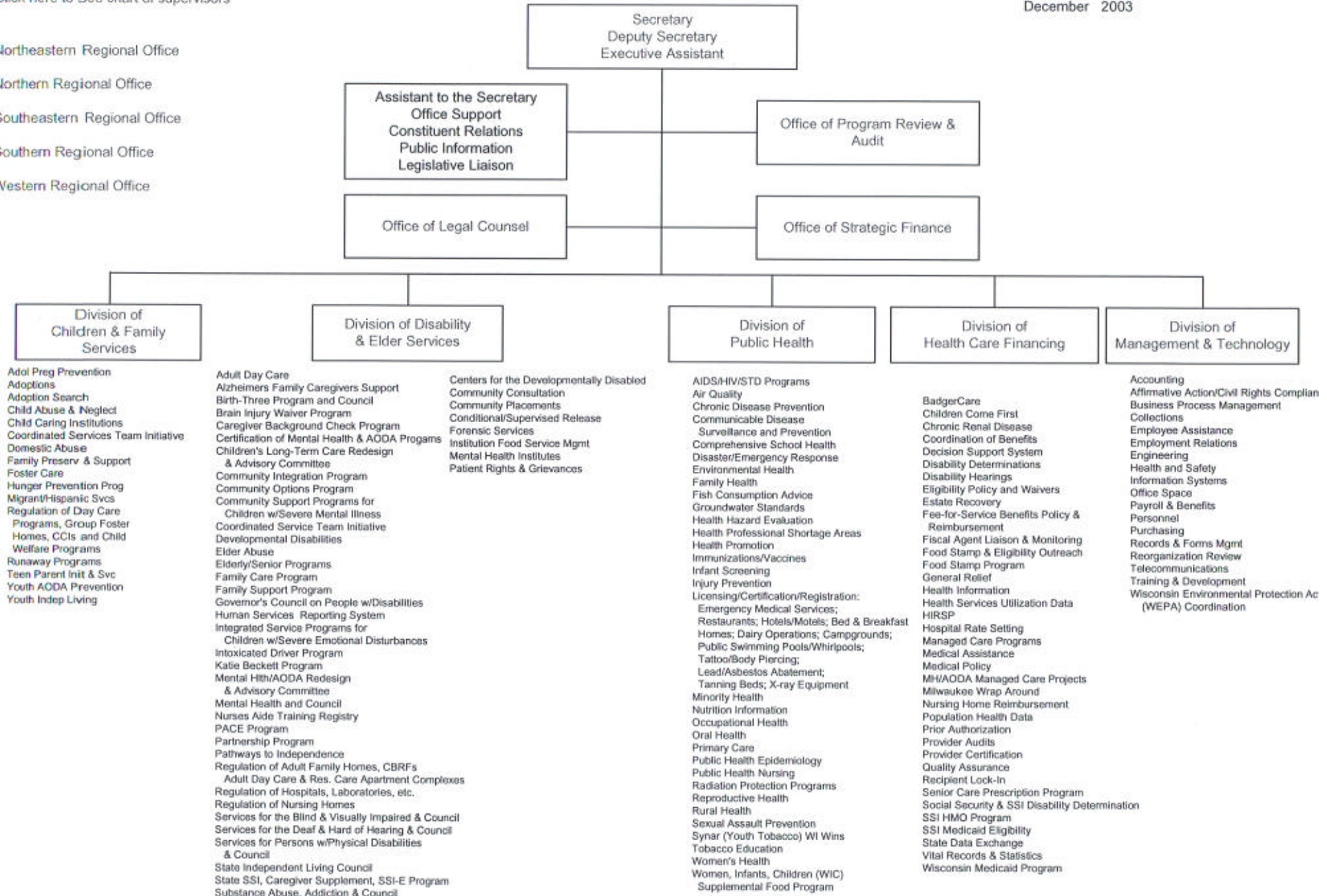
Northeastern Regional Office

Northern Regional Office

Southeastern Regional Office

Southern Regional Office

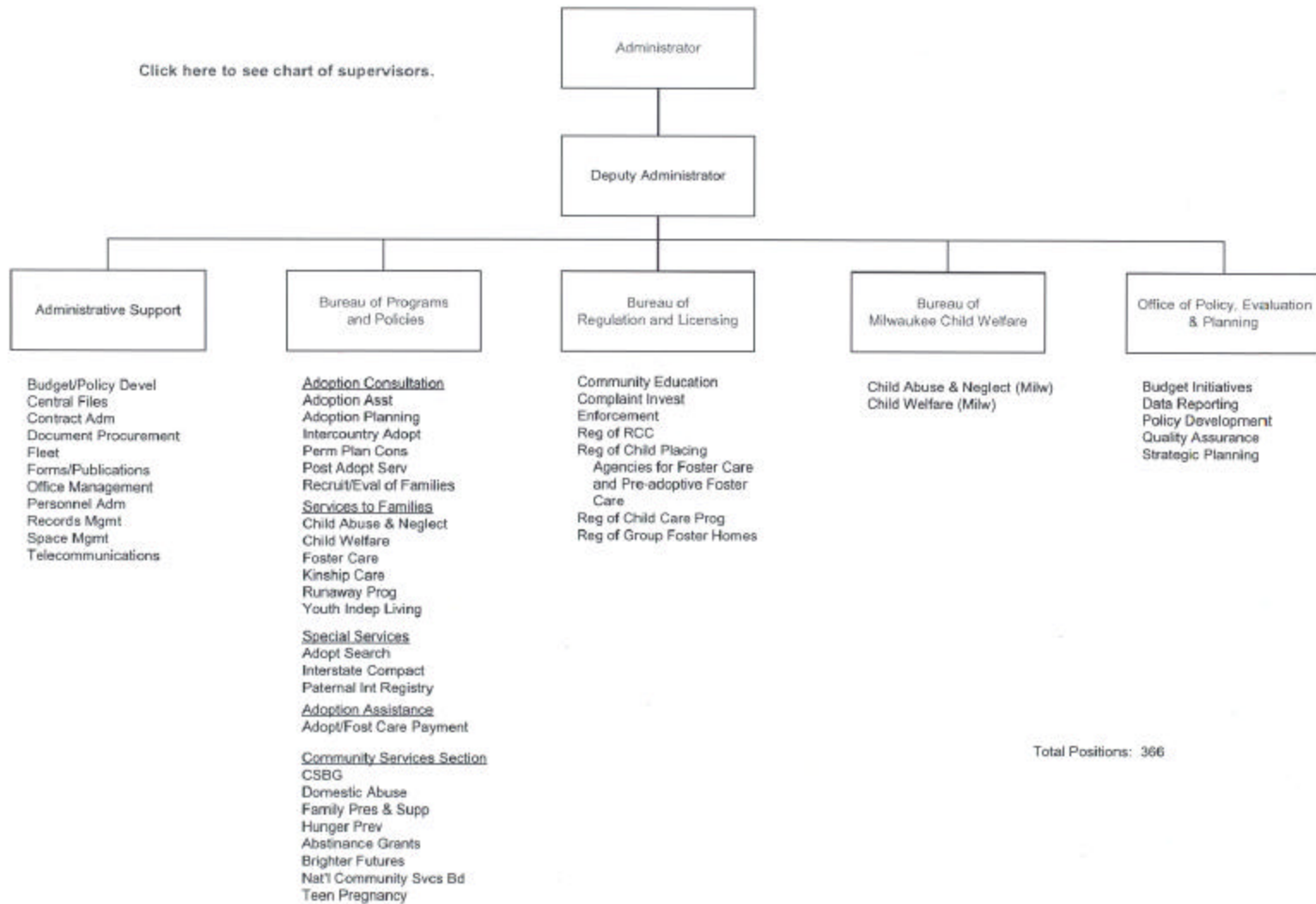
Western Regional Office



Department of Health and Family Services  
**Division of Children and Family Services**  
 Functions

Published: September 2003

[Click here to see chart of supervisors.](#)



Total Positions: 366



# **Calendar Year 2003**

**Annual Report**

## **Special Needs Adoption Program**

Prepared by:

Bureau of Programs and Policies

Division of Children and Family Services

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

March 2004



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## **I. Introduction**

In 2003, the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) Special Needs Adoption Program began a major restructuring in response to the State of Wisconsin's fiscal crisis. In response to the needs to reduce positions in state work force, a decision was made to provide special needs adoption services through three regions, rather than five, and to reduce state FTE by 14.5 positions. In spite of transitioning to a re-designed program, the state program experienced a 10% increase in the number of children who were adopted with special care needs. The Special Needs Adoption Program's (SNAP) innovative approaches to providing professional quality services have resulted in finding permanency for thousands of children in Wisconsin. In addition, surveys reflect that adoptive families have a high level of satisfaction with the services received by the program. Planning and consultation by state adoption staff with counties has assisted in moving more children to reunification or permanency through adoption. At the same time, applicants for an adoptive placement are discovering that the time to complete an adoptive homestudy has decreased from previous years. All these approaches will continue to have an impact on meeting federal benchmarks for outcomes for child welfare intervention.

**Children in out-of-home care who are made available for adoption by counties through a termination of parental rights (TPR) are referred to the State adoption program. Children are matched with adoptive parents or in the majority of cases, are adopted by their foster parents. In July 2000, DHFS entered into contracts with private child placing agencies across the state to increase our ability to move children to permanence in a quality and timely manner. Federal mandates regarding permanency for children have required that states look at ways to increase their capacity to serve the number of children needing adoptive families while maintaining adoption worker caseloads at accepted standards.**

DHFS and private partner adoption staff strive to find appropriate adoptive families to best meet the needs of children when it is not safe for them to stay with their birth parents. A majority of the children adopted through the SNAP are eligible for adoption assistance. Adoption assistance reimburses the family for some of the costs of extensive and frequently expensive care. As of February 2003, there were 6,954 children receiving Adoption Assistance through the State of Wisconsin. The Adoption Assistance Program is funded with Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and state matching funds. Adoption assistance may include:

- medical assistance for some medical costs not covered by the family's health insurance;
- a monthly reimbursement to adoptive parent(s) to assist in meeting the financial demands of caring for a child with special needs; or
- reimbursement of certain non-recurring adoption expenses (e.g., legal fees and/or agency fees) up to \$2000 per child.

Administrative Code HFS 50, Facilitating the Adoption of a Child with Special Needs, became effective in 2002. According to its requirements, a child must have, or be at high risk of developing, special care needs in order to be eligible for adoption assistance, and otherwise would not be able to be placed for adoption without assistance. Examples of a child with special care needs may be:

- an older child – 10 to 18 years of age;

- a child experiencing emotional or behavioral problems to a degree that meets established criteria;
- a sibling group of three or more that must be placed together;
- belong to a minority race and children of that minority race cannot be readily placed due to a lack of appropriate placement resources;
- a child with a disability or in need of personal care assistance (e.g., dressing, bathing or feeding) or may have special medical or physical problems that require special diets, medication or physical therapy; or
- a child at risk of developing special care needs due to poor prenatal care, birth family medical history indicating a risk for future health problems or social history background with certain risk factors.

The State of Wisconsin Adoption Program has grown considerably since July 2000 and has been able to attain permanency for many children in need of adoptive homes. The Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) oversees the Adoption Program in every county except Milwaukee, where the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) provides adoption services. In 2002, both DCFS and BMCW demonstrated a high growth in the number of children adopted. In 2003, both programs have been able to keep up the momentum of the previous year and to post increased numbers of adoptions. The state adoption program increased the number of adoptions from 544 to 562 over 2002. BMCW has completed 591 adoptions, an increase of 18% over the previous year. The overall total for the two programs for 2003 was 1153 children reaching permanency through adoption, a 10% increase over 2002.

The goal of permanency is a common thread that unites agencies to achieve the established standards of practice of the adoption program. The SNAP has evolved into a program that ensures quality services to families and timely permanence to children by adhering to performance standards that focus on best practice and comply with state and federal guidelines.

### **A. Redesign of State Adoption Program**

In March 2003, DHFS made the difficult decision to reduce the number of state social workers and supervisors in the SNAP in response to the state's fiscal crisis. The position reductions came through the closing of the Adoption Program in two regional offices, Waukesha and Rhinelander, and providing services through three expanded regions based in Eau Claire, Madison and Green Bay. The required reduction in positions is 14.5 FTE to be completed by June 30, 2004, from the previous 30.5 FTE. At the present time, the state program is well on its way to meeting the target without any layoffs, through the process of retirements and the transition of social workers to other positions in state service.

The remaining 16 FTE for state staff are comprised of three regional supervisors and 13 social workers. The 13 social workers are moving into roles working with the counties as "State Permanency Consultants", while three supervisors oversee the work of the SNAP in the three regions. The process of the change in role of state social workers to permanency consultants had been started in 2000, when DCFS entered a partnership with private agencies to provide special needs adoption services. Private agency social workers have been added to provide case management and adoption services to children and families. With the change in their caseloads, state adoption staff were able to be utilized as consultants to counties for work on specific cases

and on system and best practice models designed to achieve safe, permanent and stable home for children in out-of-home care.

The transition to the redesigned Adoption Program is not yet complete, as state staff are currently working to finalize their adoption caseloads and to increase their consultation responsibilities in their assigned counties. The specialized expertise of the state adoption staff is expected to generate improved outcomes for children, in the ability to ensure earlier intervention in permanency decisions and to assist in obtaining the effective services for children in transition. The Adoption Program began functioning in the three expanded regions on January 1, 2004.

In July 2000, DCFS entered into a formal partnership with Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities, Bethany Christian Services, and the Professional Association of Treatment Foster Homes (PATH). The partnership initiative complements the state adoption program by increasing the capacity to serve the number of children referred for adoptive placement. The redesign of the SNAP has shifted a number of responsibilities to private partner agencies that had not been theirs previously. Following the decision to change the roles of the remaining state social workers, all adoption cases are now assigned to private agency workers, no matter the level of complexity. In addition, private agency social workers will be taking over all the responsibilities of assessment of new adoptive family applicants to the program, a duty that previously rested with state social workers.

Despite the changes to the program, both the regions and BMCW have been able to keep up the high level of adoption finalizations over the past year from the previous year. The following chart reflects the trend of adoptions for special needs children in which DHFS had guardianship.

Adoption Finalizations			
Year	Regions	BMCW	Total
1995	313	151	464
1996	311	254	565
1997	321	290	611
1998	415	307	722
1999	350	304	654
2000	421	288	709
2001	464	263	727
2002	544	500	1044
2003	562	591	1153

## **B. Functions of program**

The following list of services provided by SNAP is not all-inclusive, but rather indicates the major components of the program's array of services. (See Attachment I, Steps to Adoption, page 12)

- **Adoption informational meetings** are held monthly throughout the state and are not projected to decrease in number because of the new regional structure. At these meetings an overview of the adoption program process is presented as well as information on parenting a child with special needs. The meeting provides education to new families coming into the program as "new applicants," as well as foster families who may have an interest in adopting

a foster child. The informational meeting is the initial step for most of the applicants entering the program. (See Attachment II, New Applicant Flow Chart, page 13)

In 2004, DCFS will begin using a newly developed PowerPoint presentation. The department has provided the technology to use the presentation at meetings throughout the state in order to provide interested people with a professional and focused view of the special needs adoption process. This change will go hand-in-hand with the federal recruitment efforts through AdoptUSKids, which is aimed at increasing awareness of the need for adoptive homes for special needs children.

- **Family building consultations** are completed on individuals and families who would like to take the next step in the adoption process after attending the informational meeting. At the consultation, an adoption social worker meets with the family to discuss motivation, experience, and family expectations. In addition, the adoption worker discusses with the family the realities of adopting a child with special needs and if such a child would be a good match for the family.
- **The Adoptive Family Assessment (AFA)**, is the process to complete the applicant's home study. After the screening, the applicants are provided with an adoption application and other materials needed to begin the home study process. Upon receipt of the information at the regional office, the applicant is assigned to a partner agency for completion of the home study process. Criminal background checks, reference checks, and the AFA are completed while preparing the family for placement of a child. The family preparation process includes training, counseling, and a review of the educational services that the child or family may need before and after placement of a child. Within regions throughout the state PACE training for foster, adoptive and kinship families as a preparation for parenting has been developed and has proved to be a good resource for Wisconsin families.
- **Conversions of foster homes to adoptive placements** comprised approximately 85% of the adoptions finalized in recent years. The process for these families is similar to those who enter the program as new applicants.
- Following the successful completion of the AFA, the applicant is **licensed as a foster home**. The adoption social worker explains the foster care licensing rules to applicants, provides them with a copy of the licensing rules, and ensures that the home meets licensing criteria.
- **Placement selection and matching** are critical pieces in the adoption program. Based on the completed Adoptive Family Assessment, the adoption social worker will make a recommendation taking into consideration the applicant's preferences, and the age and needs of a child for the applicants. Descriptions of available children and families are shared at monthly regional meetings between the state and partner agencies. During the year the adoption program has made changes to its selection and matching process to ensure that the state is in compliance with the federal Multi-ethnic Placement Act (MEPA). The revamped process includes documentation that ensures consideration of all prospective families for a child, as well as a clear understanding of the child's best interests in being matched with a particular family.

- **State Permanency Consultants (SPC) provide consultation** to counties during permanency planning for children in out-of-home care. This function is crucial for compliance with federal law and timely decision-making for the child's permanency. Federal outcomes measured in the recent CSFR review expect that 32% of children in out-of-home care will be adopted within 24 months from removal from the birth home. The State of Wisconsin currently has reached 21% in that category and expects to be able improve the percentage with the work of the SPCs in planning with counties.

At the time of assignment, the planning team (county worker, foster family, child – if age appropriate, counselor, school personnel, etc.) will meet to discuss the case, share pertinent information and clearly define roles. This same meeting typically occurs prior to TPR and again prior to adoption finalization. Ongoing services are identified during the process and allow for a seamless service delivery for the child and family. Concurrent planning with counties provides the best opportunity for children to experience a shorter transition into a permanent placement. (See Attachment III Timeline for Concurrent Planning Activities, page 14.)

- **Child preparation** is provided through the SNAP in a variety of ways. Children are prepared in creative child oriented ways for transition towards adoption. The worker may read books on adoption to the child, help the child create a life book, and work with the family and child through any confusion or fear they may have. Supportive services are provided as needed. When appropriate, counseling for the child and family is provided to help them deal with the transition and any other related adoption issues.
- **Case management** is provided post-TPR to the child and foster/adoptive family by an adoption social worker. Case management information is entered in the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (e-WiSACWIS), including any case notes, foster care licensing, AFA, foster care reimbursement, adoption assistance reimbursement, medical assistance, permanency plans, case plans, and Title IV-E related information.
- **Adoption assistance** is established prior to adoption finalization, once the AFA is completed and approved. Adoption assistance may consist of medical assistance, a monthly financial reimbursement, and/or a one-time adoption expense reimbursement. The adoption worker discusses adoption assistance with the family and completes necessary paperwork with the family upon application.
- **The adoption finalization process** is a significant event for everyone involved. The adoption social worker completes all necessary documentation for the courts, and the family files a petition for an adoption hearing. Adoptive parents, the child, other family members, and county and adoption workers typically attend the adoption hearing to celebrate the finalization.
- **Interstate adoption** services are also provided by the state adoption program. Children placed with families in Wisconsin from other states are serviced through the Interstate

Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC). Wisconsin children may also be placed with families residing in other states.

- **Guardianship** cases are maintained through the adoption program. Custody of a child is returned to the county when a child has not been placed in an adoptive home after two years in the State's guardianship and a TPR has occurred. Guardianship responsibilities remain with the State adoption program, while the county maintains custody, case management, and financial responsibilities. The adoption program continues to pursue adoptive resources for a child after custody is returned to the county.
- **Adoption standards** have been developed for statewide adoptions. The standards form a basis for case management and program responsibilities provided by counties, the state adoption program and contract agencies. The standards have created uniformity among all agencies involved in the adoption process and have set precedence for expectations serving children and families.
- **Quality Assurance (QA)** is a key component in measuring the success of the SNAP. A number of processes have been developed to measure outcome analysis. The QA unit has focussed the past year on communication and education of the special needs adoption staff as a means of improving performance. In addition, the unit has worked on measurement of satisfaction, foster home licensing reviews, and MEPA compliance, amongst other activities.

### C. Related Programs

#### Quality Assurance

A key component of the adoption initiative is the Quality Assurance (QA) unit. QA specialists monitor practice, analyze findings, and promote and develop program improvements within the SNAP. The BMCW has its own QA monitoring mechanism and the regional QA staff work with the BMCW to assure continuity in the methods and areas evaluated.

A major initiative of the unit during the past year has been the implementation of a monthly e-mail newsletter. The newsletter was conceived as a means of keeping open communication and creating a sense of cohesiveness in a program that was undergoing a significant redesign. Additionally, the new program structure requires consistency throughout the state in terms of practice and procedure. The newsletter, "Building Families Together", provides a means of drafting and publishing policy as well as promoting statewide uniformity of protocol for practice. Regular features include sharing of children and families, technical support for the e-WiSACWIS system, resource guides, and dissemination of practice and policy requirements. The newsletter provides a means of teaching techniques and providing expectations to workers regarding their level of practice.

DCFS managers and regional supervisors, in addition to QA staff, have identified numerous areas that require program standardization and improvement. Some areas resulted from the Standards of Practice and the contractual agreements in place with private partners, while others are governed by state and federal law, such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) and the Inter-country Adoption Act of 2000 (Hague



Convention). The QA staff have developed tools to capture and monitor the placement and matching of children with families to ensure compliance with MEPA. Other aspects of the program requiring monitoring include training standards for prospective adoptive parents, regular reviews of program standards and strategies to meet the timelines of ASFA, and compliance with completion of e-WiSACWIS documentation.

The QA staff function also seeks to implement strategies that assure integrated services with state adoption staff, partner agencies, and counties for accountability and positive client and program outcomes. To gain insight into the quality of service provision delivered by both the private agencies, a satisfaction survey is sent out annually to all adoptive families. In addition, the QA staff prepares reports on the yearly satisfaction surveys and the bi-annual survey of adoption outcomes for contract partners. Regular planning meetings with regional supervisors and managers ensure that current program issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

The following tasks of the quality assurance unit ensure a high standard of service to Wisconsin children and families within the SNAP, as well as working to meet federal and state outcome expectations:

- Consistency of administrative and judicial reviews;
- Technical support regarding e-WiSACWIS;
- Monthly newsletter regarding program policies;
- Title IV-E foster home licensing reviews;
- Written protocol and policies
- Implementation of recruitment strategies for adoptive families;
- Survey every six months of county service provision to children adopted internationally;
- Regular written analysis regarding the ongoing program progress of the SNAP;
- Monitoring and collection of documentation regarding MEPA compliance;

## **Post Adoption Services**

The DHFS funds six Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARCs) statewide. The PARCs provide assistance to families, individuals and professionals, with a focus on:

- Education, support activities and services;
- Community awareness;
- Understanding the unique issues facing adoptive families among public and private human service providers, schools, and medical care providers;
- Increasing the availability of services for adoptive families, including respite care, crisis intervention, day care, after-school care, legal help, family counseling, support groups related to adoption, access to Title XIX service providers and planning for the transition of an adopted child to adulthood; and
- Improving collaborative efforts among public and private organizations and the general public to address the needs of adoptive families in the regional area.

The PARCs bring expertise, as well as additional funding to post adoption services through grants, in-kind services and donations. The PARCs include the following agencies:

- Catholic Charities-Diocese of LaCrosse, covering the Western Region in LaCrosse and the Northern Region in Stevens Point
- Family Services of Green Bay, covering the Northeastern Region in Green Bay
- Catholic Charities - Diocese of Madison, covering the Southern Region in Madison
- Adoption Resources of Wisconsin, covering the Southeastern Region in Milwaukee
- Milwaukee through BMCW

### **Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)**

The Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) establishes legal and financial responsibilities for children placed across state lines pursuant s.[48.988](#) Wis. Stats. and applies to the following types of interstate placements:

- Adoptive
- Foster Care
- Relative
- Group Home
- Residential Care Centers for Children and Youth
- Residential Treatment Facilities

The Interstate Compact is a legal contract between all fifty states, the District of Columbia and U.S. Virgin Islands that ensures that the jurisdictional, administrative and human rights obligations of all the parties involved in the interstate placement are protected. Children placed out-of-state need to be assured the same protection and support services that would be provided if the child remained in their “home state.” They must also be assured a return to their original jurisdiction should the placement prove not to be in their best interest or the need for out-of-state services cease.

The ICPC provides a mechanism for public and private child placing agencies to obtain a home study of a proposed placement resource in another state prior to moving the child to the other state. It also provides for supervision of a Wisconsin court order over a child’s placement in another state. Without an approved interstate compact prior to moving the child, the court order from the sending state cannot legally be supervised in the receiving state. ICPC cases are facilitated by regional state adoption staff due to the complexity of working across state lines and negotiation involved with other states.

<b>Adoption Cases Processed via the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC)</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>CY 02</b>	<b>CY 03</b>
Requests for Adoptive Placements into WI	122	126
Requests for Adoptive Placements from WI to Other States	51	60
Total	173	186

## II. Cost and Methodology

The adoption contracts with the private partner agencies are paid on a case rate basis. In previous years, calculations did not include contract spending for adoptions and some indirect costs. While the cost per adoption in 2002 appears to have increased, this is the result of including 100% of the private partner contract costs plus 30% of the state adoption worker cost.

The following methodology was used to determine the cost of adoption services in CY 2002:

- The actual costs of the private partner contracts is included in the calculation. The total cost of contracts for CY 2002 is \$1,690,892.
- Adoption staff costs include 30% of the actual cost of professional and supervisory positions assigned to adoption activities. This is the result of approximately 70% of state adoption social worker time spent on case consultation to counties. In order to achieve this level of consultation by state adoption social workers, the majority of adoption casework was assigned to the contract partners. Wage adjustments, due to contracts that expired July 1, 2002, are not included. Salary cost for adoption staff is \$313,584 that represents 30% of the total.
- Fringe costs for adoption staff is calculated at \$120,596 (30% of total).
- Rent/lease was calculated at actual costs for office space at each regional or district location. The total costs for district or regional office space for CY 2002 was \$35,420 (30% of total).
- Other costs including telephone, travel, postage, printing, training, and other services for CY 2002 was \$151,039 (30% of total).
- Staff time for adoption and supervisory staff is assigned to adoption activities at 100%.
- The average costs per adoption by the Department in CY 2002 was determined by dividing the total costs of adoption services by 544 adoption finalizations.
- The costs of adoption services does not include miscellaneous departmental functions and other State administrative expenses that may indirectly support the adoption program.
- The costs of adoption does not include maintenance reimbursement to foster parents or adoptive families prior to adoption assistance payments made by the Department or medical assistance costs for children placed in foster care or an adoptive home.
- Costs related to BMCW are not incorporated in this calculation.

The chart below displays the adoption and cost figures for recent years.

<b>COMPARISON OF DEPARTMENT ADOPTION FINALIZATIONS AND COST</b>					
<b>Factors Considered</b>	<b>CY 02</b>	<b>CY 01</b>	<b>CY 00</b>	<b>CY 99</b>	<b>CY 98</b>
Number of Adoptions	544	464	421	350	415
Cost of Adoption Services	\$2,311,531*	\$1,828,564	\$2,142,243	\$1,999,190	\$1,723,857
Average Cost per Adoption	\$4,249	\$3,941	\$5,088	\$5,712**	\$4,154

\*Denotes the change to finalized adoptions and other cost factor changes as indicated in the 2002 Annual Adoption Report – Cost and Methodology.

\*\*Does not include 1999 wage increases that were approved in union contracts after March 1999.

### **III. Summary**

Over the past few years, the adoption program has experienced steady growth in new guardianship cases that are moving to adoption. Due to this increase, the program contracted with private agencies to assist in moving children to adoption in a timely manner, and to ensure that staff caseloads would not be a barrier to permanence for children. As a result of this partnership, the state completed a record number of adoptions in CY 2002.

Prior to collaborating with private agencies, the state adoption staff had reached a maximum goal of 430 adoptions in one year. Worker capacity was consumed with ongoing case management activities and lack of standardized practice. Social worker caseloads were in excess of 30 child cases per worker. The partnership has resulted in the decrease of state adoption social worker caseloads to about eight child cases per worker. Our enhanced capacity through the partnership is largely responsible for the increased number of finalized adoptions and decreased state adoption worker caseloads. The increase in adoptions will result in a federal adoption incentive for federal fiscal year 2002 of approximately \$1.2 million which will help offset costs in BMCW and the state adoption program.

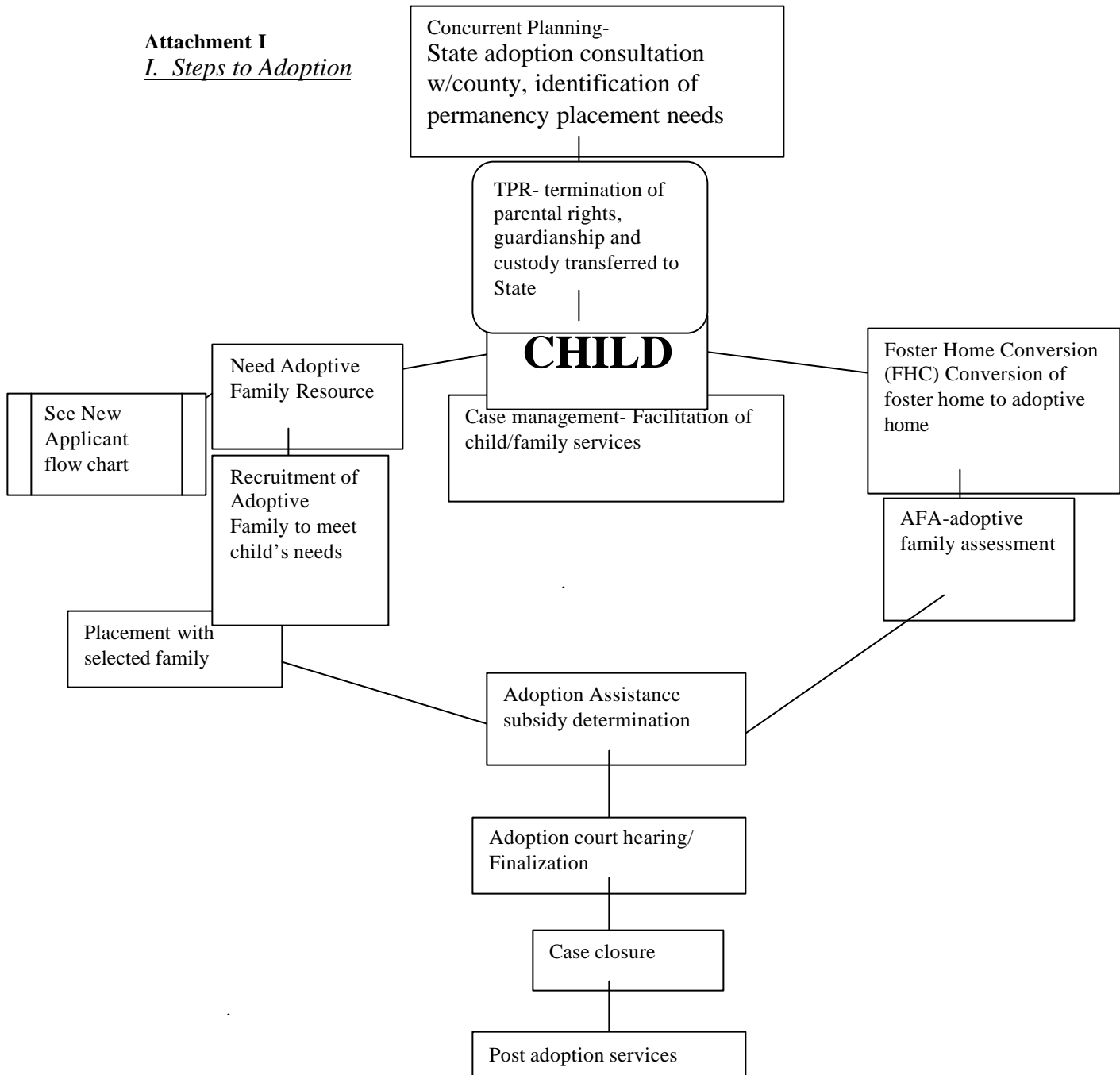
The previous method of calculating the costs of the program based on placements could result in a child being counted more than once in a given year or counted in successive years if the adoptive placement changed. Calculations based on finalized adoption numbers ensure accuracy and consistency of base statistics.

The implementation of the QA program allows specific analysis of the outcomes of the adoption program. Through these efforts the program will have information beyond statistics that will include actual client, family, partner agency, court and case file information to incorporate into quality improvement efforts.

The focus of the adoption program continues to be on providing timely and quality adoption services.

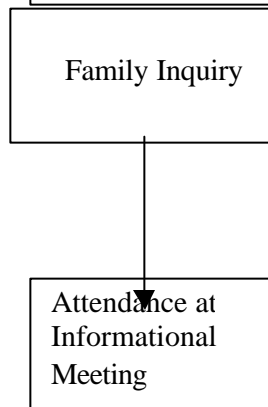
## **APPENDIX**

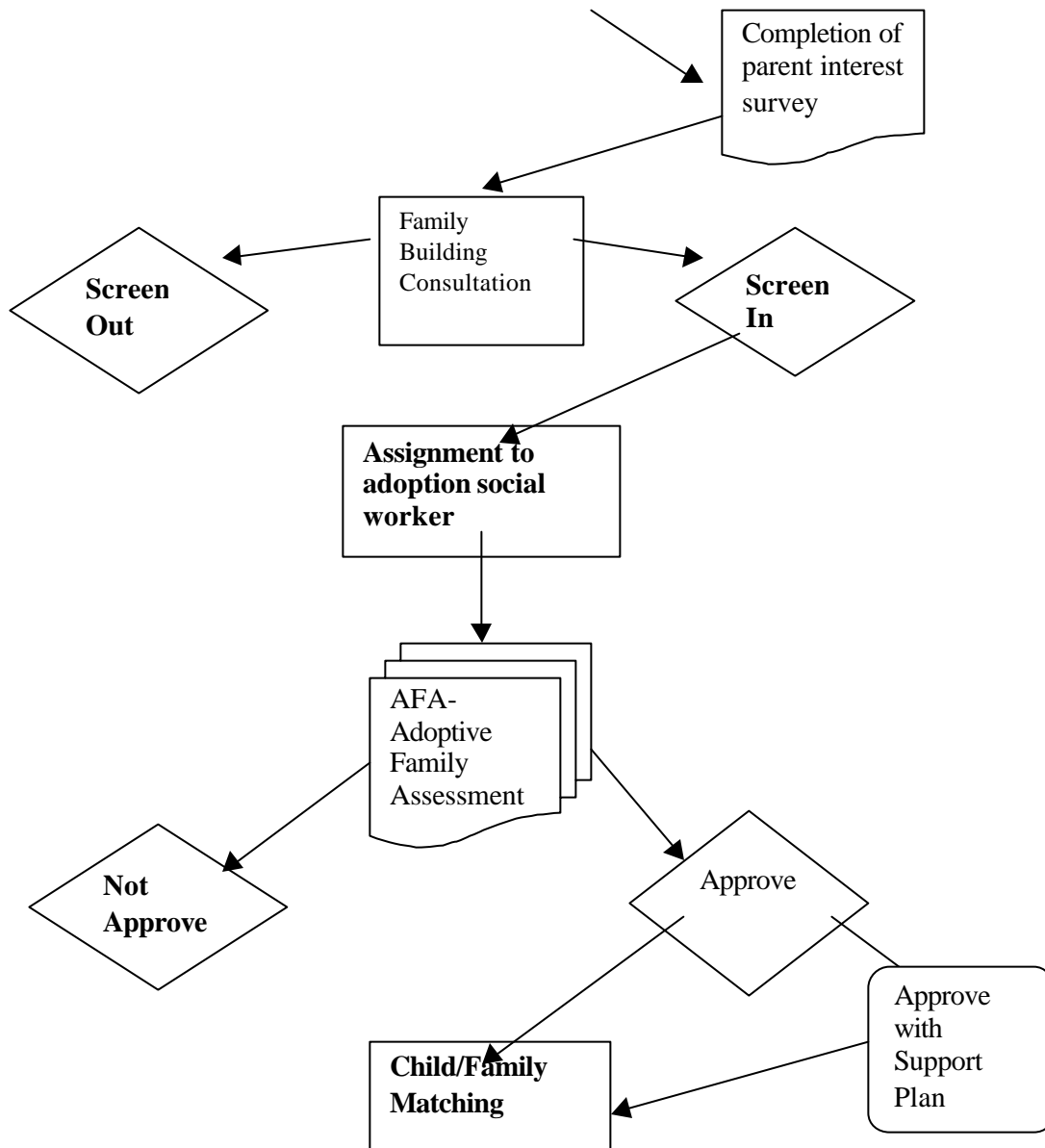
**Attachment I**  
**I. Steps to Adoption**



**Attachment II**

New Applicant  
Flow Chart







## TIMELINE FOR CONCURRENT PLANNING ACTIVITIES

This document is designed as a working tool to assist county and state staff to initiate referral, enhance communication, identify concurrent planning benchmarks and coordinate activities to ensure timely permanence for children. At the time that ANY finding or recommendation by the county case manager, the Administrative review panel, the Judge or GAL for a concurrent plan, requires the county case manager make a referral to the State Permanency Consultant (SPC), consisting of the Intake and supporting documents. A referral must be made to the SPC at any time that permanency plan does not include reunification.

The adoption worker becomes a member of the planning team for the case. At the time of assignment the team (county worker, foster family, child – if age appropriate, counselor, school personnel, etc.) will be brought together to discuss the case, share pertinent information and clearly define roles. This same meeting should take place prior to TPR and again prior to adoption finalization. This will help provide a seamless service delivery process for the child and family, as ongoing services are needed.

Case Event	Timeframe	Judicial Finding/ Legal Decision	Task and Responsibility
Temporary Physical Custody Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>48 hours after decision to hold</b> excluding legal holidays, Sat. &amp; Sun.</li> <li>- Court may grant additional <b>5 days</b> for RE to Prevent Removal Finding for good cause shown at TPC (should be an extremely rare practice)</li> </ul>	Contrary to the Welfare (CTW), Reasonable Efforts (RE) to Prevent Removal, & RE to Safely Return Home	<b>County Case Manager:</b> If birth family has high risk factors for Fast Track TPR, may refer to SPC.
ANY OTHER INITIAL REMOVAL HRG:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First court order that authorizes removal, such as Dispositional Change of Placement Orders, etc.</li> </ul>	CTW & RE to Prevent Removal	
PERMANENCY PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Filed with the court <b>within 60 days</b> after removal.</li> <li>- If RE to Prevent Removal/ Reunify <b>NOT REQUIRED</b>, plan must be reviewed <b>within 30 days</b> after judicial finding at a Permanency Plan Hearing</li> <li>- Must be reviewed at least once every <b>6 months</b></li> </ul>		<b>County Case Manager:</b> See above.
PERMANENCY PLAN REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial review must be conducted no later than <b>6 months</b> after date of removal</li> <li>- Subsequent review must be conducted no later than <b>6 months</b> after previous Perm. Plan Hearing</li> <li>- Conducted by admin. panel or court</li> </ul>	If Held by Court: RE to Achieve the Goals of the Permanency Plan	<b>County Case Manager:</b> If goal does not include reunification, the SPC is a resource for all other types of plans for permanence.
9 MONTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>9 Months</b> from date of removal</li> </ul>		<b>County Case Manager:</b> Latest date that the referral must be made to SPC for permanency planning services, to allow for possible photolisting of unmatched child.
PERMANENCY PLAN HEARING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial Permanency Plan Hearing must be held by the <u>earlier of the following two dates</u> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>6 months</b> after previous permanency plan review or</li> <li>• <b>12 months</b> after date of removal</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Subsequent Permanency Plan Hearing(s) must be held no later than <b>6 months</b> from the previous permanency plan review</li> <li>- Hearing must be conducted by a judge or court commissioner</li> <li>- Court shall make written findings relating to all determination listed under Stat. 48.38(5)(c)</li> </ul>	RE to Achieve the Goals of the Permanency Plan	<p><b>State Permanency Consultant:</b> Reviews referral information assessing child for special needs &amp; adoptability. May meet with case manager, foster family, birth parents, and relatives regarding issues of adoption. Is available for discussions &amp; questions. Gather the record materials for referral to the Adoption Worker.</p> <p>Recruits/screens potential new adoptive placements for matching. Completes the MEPA compliance questionnaire on all cases referred for consultation. Is liaison between potential adoptive families, county case manager, et al? County case manager should participate in presentation to potential new adoptive family. If appropriate, completes a letter to the court accepting guardianship.</p> <p>Will consult with the regional adoption supervisor, ongoing, to identify an appropriate time for assignment to an Adoption</p>

			<p>Worker. *</p> <p>An <b>Adoption Worker</b> may be involved for a county identified “Concurrent Planning Home” or recruitment of a “legal risk” placement. At any time when an Adoption Worker should be involved with case planning, all parties to the decision-making process will be brought together to discuss the case plan, to determine who is responsible for decisions and to identify each party’s role. Involvement of the Adoption Worker provides a seamless transfer to Adoption and reduces any confusion of roles with the SPC. At any time direct services are required i.e. FFA, AFA as related to the home and/or placement an Adoption Worker will be assigned. **</p>
PETITION FOR TPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- When appropriate</li> <li>- If <b>15 of 22 months</b> in out-of-home care, unless TPR filing exception documented</li> <li>- <b>Within 60 days</b> after a RE NOT REQUIRED finding if an abandoned infant or parent convicted of a listed felony</li> </ul>		<p><b>County Case Manager:</b> Completes paperwork and submits to DA/ Corp Counsel. Notifies the State Permanency Consultant a petition will be filed.</p> <p><b>Regional Adoption Supervisor:</b> Completes Matrix: assigns to Adoption Worker/refers to Private Partner Leadworker for assignment to Adoption Worker.</p>
TPR		TPR	<p><b>State Permanency Consultant:</b> Alerts regional manager of new guardianship case for Assignment if not previously assigned. Adoption worker assumes case management responsibility. The SPC will continue in a secondary/consultative role.</p>
ADOPTION CASE ASSIGNMENT			<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Meets with the SPC, county worker, foster family, and child if not completed pre-TPR. Studies family conversion and provides all adoption services.</p>
PETITION FOR ADOPTION			<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Prepares the adoptive home study and adoption finalization paperwork for adoption hearing.</p>
ADOPTION HEARING		Adoption Finalized	<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Informs SPC and the county case manager of all hearings related to the assigned cases so they can attend if they would like to.</p>
PERMANENCY PLAN REVIEW/ HEARING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review: <b>6 months</b> after previous Perm. Plan Hearing</li> <li>- Hearing: <b>6 months</b> after previous Perm. Plan Review</li> </ul>	RE to Achieve the Goals of the Permanency Plan	<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Invites the county designee and sends a copy of the Plan review and summary to the county designee.</p>
<b>NO ADOPTION PLAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- At any time a determination is made that no adoptive resources exist for a particular child, due to age, refusal of the child to consider, institutional placement.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Initiates a meeting with the county manager and all members of the child’s treatment team to discuss the plan for the child. Adoption worker will prepare and provide the Referral Information-Return of Custody packet for the county including all the information in the adoption file on the child.</p>
18 MONTHS POST TPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>18 months After Date of TPR</b></li> </ul>		<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Informs County supervisor of potential Return of Custody to the County. Includes designated County worker in planning for transitioning custody to county.</p>
RETURN OF CUSTODY TO COUNTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>2 Years</b> After Date of TPR</li> </ul>	Custody Returned	<p><b>Adoption Worker:</b> Submits any updated paperwork and petition for Return of Custody Hearing (see No Adoption Plan).</p>

\* The Matrix will be completed at the time a case is referred to an Adoption Worker.

\*\* An adoption worker will be assigned as a secondary worker whenever direct service from the adoption program is needed.

**State of WI Sites**

State of Wisconsin Portal

<http://www.wisconsin.gov/state/home>

State of Wisconsin DHFS

<http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov>

Adoption in Wisconsin

<http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/children/adoption>

**Legislative/Administrative Codes Referenced in the Report**

Wisconsin State Legislature

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us>

Chapter 48, Children's Code

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/01Stat048.pdf>

Chapter 938, Juvenile Justice Code

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/statutes/01Stat0938.pdf>

HFS 42, State Adoption Information Center

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs042.pdf>

HFS 50, Facilitating the Adoption of Children With Special Needs

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs050.pdf>

HFS 51, Adoption of Children With Special Needs

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs051.pdf>

HFS 56, Foster Home Care for Children

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/code/hfs/hfs056.pdf>

**Federal Sites**

Administration for Children and Families

<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov>

- Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
- Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act 2000
- Child Welfare Policy Manual
- Indian Child Welfare Act
- Inter-country Adoption Act of 2000
- Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001

Children's Bureau - Adoption Site

<http://www.adoptuskids.com>

United States Department of Health and Human Services - Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA)

<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/ocr/mepaipp.htm>

American Public Human Services Administration (APHSA)

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

<http://icpc.aphsa.org/>

**Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARCs)**

Adoption Resources of Wisconsin

<http://www.wiadopt.org>

Family Services of NE Wisconsin

<http://www.familyservicesnew.org>

Catholic Charities Diocese of LaCrosse

<http://www.friendsofadoption.org>

Catholic Charities Diocese of Madison

<http://www.catholiccharitymadison.org>

## INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS: OUTCOMES and ANALYSIS

Hague Convention: Federal Mandate for State Reporting

**Initial Data****Reporting Period:** January – December 2003

**Purpose:** To collect information required by International Adoption Act 2000 (IAA) for federal reporting and program planning. Cases identified on this form will be reviewed for further case-specific information. Workers or other staff identified will be contacted by state Quality Assurance staff.

County: \_\_\_\_\_

**Children in Placement/ 2003 (CHIPS, JIPS or Delinquency)**

- Of all children in placement at any given point in 2003, how many of those immigrated to the U.S. as a result of an international adoption?
- Please provide name and phone # of case worker/contact person for each applicable case in question 1, as well as the child's name, date of birth, and the applicable jurisdiction:

Worker Name	Worker phone number	Child's Name	Child's D.O.B.	Jurisdiction
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.

**Terminations of Parental Rights/2003 (CHIPS, JIPS or Delinquency)**

- Of all Terminations of Parental Rights in 2003, how many of those pertained to a child who immigrated to the U.S. as a result of an international adoption?
- Please provide name and phone # of case worker/contact person for each applicable case in question 3, as well as child's name and date of birth:

Worker Name	Worker phone number	Child's Name	Child's D.O.B.	Jurisdiction
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.
				<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinq.

Name &amp; title of county staff providing information: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You

# INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS: OUTCOMES and ANALYSIS

Hague Convention: Federal Mandate for State Reporting

## Out of Home Placement

Reporting Period: January – December 2003

\*This form (a follow-up to the “Initial Data” survey of county cases involving children who immigrated to the U.S. as a result of an International Adoption) provides needed, case-specific information.

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker Name	Worker phone	Child's Name	Child's d.o.b.	Child's Age	Jurisdiction
					<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency

### Out-of-Home Placement/2003

1. Dates of Child's placement (this episode): From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

For office use only: ☐ 02 ☐ 03

2. Circumstances necessitating placement out of the home:

3. Placement Type: ☐ Foster care ☐ Relative ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Outcome of out-of-home care or permanency plan:

### Historical: International Adoption

5. Child's pre-adoptive name:

6. Country of Origin:

7. Adoption Agency that arranged the adoption (name/state):

8. VISA type: ☐ IR-3 (Readoption Not required) ☐ IR-4 (Readoption Required)

9. Readoption in United States: ☐ Unknown ☐ No ☐ Yes → If Yes, State:

10. Finalized in United States: ☐ Unknown ☐ No ☐ Yes → If Yes, State:

11. If above data is not known to county staff:

Name(s) of adoptive parents:

Address:

Phone:

### For Office Use Only

Readoption required: ☐ No (This is a dissolution/plcmt)

☐ Yes

If Yes, did Readoption take place: ☐ No (This is a Disruption) ☐ Yes (This is a dissolution/plcmt)

Name & title of county staff providing information: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You

**INTERNATIONAL ADOPTIONS: OUTCOMES and ANALYSIS**

Hague Convention: Federal Mandate for State Reporting

***Termination of Parental Rights*****Reporting Period:** *January – December 2003*

\*This form (a follow-up to the “*Initial Data*” survey of county cases involving children who immigrated to the U.S. as a result of an International Adoption) provides needed case-specific information.

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker Name	Worker phone	Child's Name	Child's d.o.b.	Child's Age	Jurisdiction
					<input type="checkbox"/> CHIPS <input type="checkbox"/> JIPS <input type="checkbox"/> Delinquency

**Termination/Dissolution 2003**

12. Date of TPR:

13. Date child placed (this episode) leading to TPR:

For office use only: ☐ 02 ☐ 03

14. Circumstances necessitating TPR:

15. Child's placement type at time of TPR: ☐ Foster home ☐ Treatment foster home ☐ Fost/Adopt home☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_4. Post-TPR Permanency Plan: ☐ Long-term foster care ☐ Special Needs Adoption  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_**Historical: International Adoption**

5. Child's pre-adoptive name:

6. Country of Origin:

7. Adoption Agency that arranged adoption (name/state):

8. *If above data is not known to county staff:*

Name(s) of adoptive parents:

Address:

Phone:

Name &amp; title of county staff providing information: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You

## DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE  
2917 INTERNATIONAL LANE, SUITE 110

MADISON WI 53704

Telephone: 608-243-2400

FAX: 608-243-2426

www.dhfs.state.wi.us

Jim Doyle  
GovernorHelene Nelson  
Secretary**State of Wisconsin****Department of Health and Family Services**

To: Certified Professional

Re: Individualized Child Assessment Form  
Purpose and Instructions

Date: January 28, 2003

You have been asked to complete an individualized child assessment regarding a placement decision of a child in foster care. The placement decision is related to compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, as amended (42 USC 1996b), commonly referred to as MEPA, which prohibits the delay or denial of a foster care or adoptive placement based on race, color, or national origin (RCNO). MEPA includes a penalty and corrective action plan provision for any state or entity receiving federal assistance that violates this section of the law. Under MEPA, RCNO can be raised as a factor of consideration when making a foster care or adoptive placement only in unique and individual circumstances. Should RCNO be raised, the consideration must be narrowly tailored to the child's documented and/or expressed needs and based on the child's best interest. Even then, RCNO cannot be the sole factor used to determine a foster care or adoptive placement for any child.

When RCNO has been identified as a possible factor in a placement decision, the child must undergo an independent assessment by a certified professional. The professional must complete Section II of the Individualized Child Assessment Form stating whether RCNO should be considered in the placement of the child as indicated by the child's individual needs. Individual needs shall include, but not be limited to, an assessment of the following factors:

- Child's emotional, behavioral, and/or developmental background
- Medical and /or educational needs
- Cognitive functioning
- Placement history
- Experiences in and out of placements
- Connection with birth family and/or significant other relevant to the anticipated foster and/or adoptive placement setting.

When the assessment is completed, the certified professional returns the original form to the agency that has requested the assessment. At that point the agency reviews the recommendation and forwards the form to:

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services**  
**1 West Wilson Street Room 527**  
**PO Box 8916**  
**Madison, WI 53708-8916**

**State of Wisconsin  
Multi-Ethnic Placement Act Compliance  
Process for Use of Forms**

The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act, commonly referred to as MEPA, prohibits the delay or denial of a foster care or adoptive placement based on race, color, or national origin (RCNO). MEPA includes a penalty and corrective action plan provision for any state receiving federal assistance that violates this section the law. Under MEPA, RCNO can be raised as a factor of consideration when making a foster care or adoptive placement only in unique and individual circumstances. Should RCNO be raised, the consideration must be narrowly tailored to the child's documented and/or expressed needs and based upon the child's best interests. Even then, RCNO cannot be the sole factor used to determine a foster care or adoptive placement for any child.

In order to monitor MEPA compliance in the State of Wisconsin, three forms have been developed for use in family selection and placement decisions. They should be used in the following way:

- **Adoptive Placement Selection Data**

All adoptive placements should include this form. The child's name, DOB, race, and sibling placement consideration is marked, as well as the date of placement and the date of selection of family.

- For foster care conversion cases, kinship, and ICWA placements, the top of the form is all that needs to be filled out and the bottom signed. Those placement decisions are made prior to guardianship by the State of Wisconsin.
- For NEW PLACEMENTS, the rest of the form will be filled out in addition to Placement Decision Making Assessment, which should be attached.

- **Placement Decision Making Assessment**

**All new placements should document the placement decision by means of this form.**

**The form is to be used in conjunction with State Regional Supervisor, who is to be consulted on all placement decisions. Completion of the form will allow families to be assessed competitively and will justify matching decisions. Following the matching staffing, all families not chosen are to be notified of the decision.**

- **Individualized Child Assessment Form**

**In any case where the social worker has identified that RCNO might be applied to a child's situation, the worker and supervisor complete Section I to request an evaluation by an independent assessor. The form is then sent to the professional making the assessment, along with the "instructions to professionals". When the assessment and recommendation are completed, the caseworker will meet with the State Regional Supervisor to complete Section III. In the case of a DHFS social worker, Section III should be completed by the Adoption and Consultation Section Manager.**



## Individualized Child Assessment Form

**Note: This form is to be completed by the child placement agency when race, color, or national origin is used as a factor in making placement decisions for foster care or adoption.**

<b>Section I. To be completed by child placing agency.</b>			
Child's Name	Type of Placement <input type="checkbox"/> Foster <input type="checkbox"/> Adoption	Child's Date of Birth	Child's Race
Agency Name and Address			
Caseworker Name (please print)	Worker Signature	Date	Phone
Supervisor Name (please print)	Supervisor Signature	Date	Phone

<b>Section II. To be completed by licensed social worker, psychologist, or clinical therapist who is not an employee of the placing agency.</b>		
Please provide your assessment of this individual child that describes the child's distinct needs based on his/her race, color, or national origin, and whether it is in the child's best interest to take these needs into consideration when placing this child for foster care or adoption. Please address whether or not the child's needs can be met by prospective foster or adoptive parents of a different race, color, or national origin. Attach a copy of your assessment and recommendation and return to the placing agency.		
In my professional opinion, race, color, or national origin <input type="checkbox"/> Should <input type="checkbox"/> Should Not   be considered as a factor in the child's placement		
Name of Professional (please print)	Credentials	Phone
Signature	Date	

<b>Section III. To be completed by the review team.</b>	
After review of the Individualized Child Assessment and Recommendation, it has been determined that the use of race, color, or national origin <input type="checkbox"/> Should <input type="checkbox"/> Should Not   be a consideration in the placement decision. If this decision is different from the professional's recommendation, attach a statement of rationale overriding the professional's recommendation. This determination is valid for six months.	
Date of Final Decision	Expiration Date
Caseworker Signature	Date
Caseworker's Supervisor Signature	Date
State Regional Supervisor Signature	Date
Section Manager (when applicable)	Date

**A copy of this completed form must be sent to:**

**Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services**  
**Attn: Karen Slaney**  
**1 West Wilson Room 527**  
**PO Box 8916**  
**Madison, WI 53708-8916**

## Adoptive Placement Selection Data

Child Name _____ D.O.B. _____	
Child Race: <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Caucasian</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asian</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>African-American</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Native-American</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hispanic</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>	
Sibling placement consideration: <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>	
County of TPR: _____	Date of Guardianship: _____
Date Family Selected : _____	Date of Placement: _____

**1. Placement Type** (Check one):

- ☐ Foster Home Conversion, then STOP                      ☐ Kinship to Adoption, then STOP  
☐ *Foster Home Conversion/ICWA, then STOP*                      ☐ *New Placement/ICWA, then STOP*

NEW PLACEMENT, then Proceed: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Adoptive Placement Jurisdiction** (Answer in relation to the TPR County):

**Within same region of the State** ☐ **Other region of the State** ☐ **Out of State** ☐ **Received from another State, then STOP. Placement-decision responsibility lies with placing state.**

**3. Race/Color or National Origin consideration with Approval (Form # CFS 555)** ☐ **Yes**    ☐ **No**

**4. Adoptive Parent Race** (Check One):

**Race of parent 1:** (Adopting Mother OR Adopting Single Parent)

☐ Caucasian    ☐ Asian    ☐ African-American    ☐ Native-American    ☐ Hispanic    ☐ Other

**Race of parent 2:** (Adopting Father OR Partner of Adopting single parent above)

☐ Caucasian    ☐ Asian    ☐ African-American    ☐ Native-American    ☐ Hispanic    ☐ Other    ☐ N/A

**5. Please identify any barriers to timely matching and placement:** ☐ **N/A**

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**5. Check recruitment methods used to identify potential families:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> SACWIS matching window           | <input type="checkbox"/> TV Special        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photo-listing                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Matching meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide email to other workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____       |

**Worker's Signature**

Date

**Supervisor's Signature**

Date

---

## Placement Decision Making Assessment

The documentation of child's needs and family factors is meant to be a tool to assist in the placement selection process. The decision should not be made solely on the basis of this tool, but in collaboration of all factors considered for the best interest of the child/ren.

I. Child(ren) Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

II. Dates of Matching Staff meetings \_\_\_\_\_

Names of persons participating in placement staff meeting:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

III. Summary of child's individual needs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Multiethnic Placement Act/ Race, Color, National Origin

Complete this box only if race, color, or national origin is being considered a factor in placement consideration.

Does the child have specific needs that require race, color, or national origin to be taken into consideration?

YES      ☒ NO      ☐

If yes, has an individualized assessment of the child's particular needs been completed?

☐ YES      ☐ NO

Can race, color, or national origin be used as a factor in the placement decision process?

☐ YES      ☐ NO      **Please attach the individualized child assessment form**

Approval date on the child's individual assessment:

Expiration date for the child's individual assessment:

Were all available families considered for this child? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If NO, explain:

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List all families that were formally reviewed:

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The following families remain as possible placement resources for this child(ren):

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For the remaining families, consider factors reflected in the following assessment tool. Check N/A if item is not a child need. Compare the needs of the child with each family's ability to meet that need. Record strengths (+), areas needing improvement (-), or neutral (0) in each family column as it pertains to meeting the child's identified needs. Again, this is only a tool to help support decision making during the matching process and the final decision should not be based solely on the following checklist. Furthermore, it is possible for one element to override all other components. For example, a family who otherwise appears ideal for a child may be ruled out on one (-) should that issue pose a significant risk to the child's safety, health, permanency, or wellbeing.

Check plus (+) or minus (-) or neutral (o) in each box as it pertains to each family's ability to meet the child's specific needs.						
CHILD'S NEEDS	N/A	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
<b>Safety Needs</b>						
Family is able to meet child's specific health needs						
Family able to meet child's physical needs						
CHILD'S NEEDS	N/A	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
Adequate supervision available to meet child's needs						

<b>Permanency Needs</b>						
Family willing to accept legal risk placements						
Family willing to have contact with: Birth parents, foster parents, siblings, other.						
Family willing to adopt siblings if available in future						
Family maintains relationship with birth parents, fost/adopt parents, siblings, others						
<b>Stability and Continuity</b>						
Child has positive relationship with family						
Child will remain in same environment						
Child will remain in same school						
Child will remain in same activities (scouts, sports)						
Child will remain in same faith community						
<b>CHILD'S NEEDS</b>	N/A	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
<b>Family Structure</b>						
Child needs to be: a)youngest b)oldest c)only child						
Child needs to be placed w/siblings						
Child needs: a)Two parents b)Single Mother c)Single Father d)additional support						

in home						
<b>Physical Environment</b>						
Child needs a stay at home parent						
Child needs: Own bedroom						
Child Needs handicapped accessible environment						
<b>Therapy Needs</b>						
Child needs to participate in therapy						
Child needs to attend his/her religious preference						
Family willing to participate in treatment goals						
Family understands/ advocates for special education services						
Family accepts child with unknown life expectancy						
<b>CHILD'S NEEDS</b>	N/A	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
Family able to cope with frequent hospitalizations/doct or visits						
Other:						
<b>Communication</b>						
Family speaks English						
Family speaks additional language						

Family has experience with language barriers						
<b>Experience</b>						
Family is aware of community resources						
Family has experience working w/birth parents						
Family has experience w/ foster/adopt children						
Family previously adopted a child with special needs						
Family has experience parenting a child who was sexually abused						
Family has experience parenting a sexual perpetrator						
<b>CHILD'S NEEDS</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
Family has experience parenting a child with medical, emotional, and/or behavioral needs						
Family has history of commitment						
<b>Family Expectations</b>						
Family comfortable with birth parent contact						
Family expects child to be involved in family activities						
Family expects child to attend their church						

Family has realistic academic expectations						
Family comfortable with child needing services as adult						
Has the family experienced recent events: Death, birth, marriage, divorce, illness, job loss, placement disruption, adoption finalization						
<b>Parenting Styles</b>						
Family's level of activity meets needs of child						
Child needs highly structured environment						
<b>CHILD'S NEEDS</b>	<b>N/A</b>	Family A	Family B	Family C	Family D	Comments
Child needs less structured environment						
Child would do best with strong a) paternal b) maternal c) equalitarian parental relationship						
Child needs parents with specialized training						
Family displays personality traits that match child's						
<b>Support Systems</b>						
Family has connections within community; church, organizations.						
Extended family supportive						
Family accepts child's health needs						



Family accepts child's mental health needs.						
Family could benefit from training						
Other:						

**Document additional considerations given for matching decision.**

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Indicate below date of letters sent to families that were not the best match in meeting the child's needs:

Family Choice 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Family Choice 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Family Choice 3: \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Family Choice 4: \_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

**Staff involved in decision making:**

Signatures

Agency

Date

Caseworker\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor\_\_\_\_\_

State Regional Supervisor\_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

MARATHON COUNTY  
CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

The Marathon County Citizen Review Panel (CRP) is one of three CRP's in Wisconsin. The Panel began its work in May of 2001 and meets once each month.

Marathon County is located in north central Wisconsin. It is the largest in size of Wisconsin's counties, covering an area of 1,584 square miles. The latest census tally shows Marathon County to be one of the areas in the state with a population increase. Marathon County has a population of 126,031.

The mission of the Marathon County Citizen Review Panel is:

- To assure that children and families needing child welfare/
- Justice services in the community are provided the best possible services within the context of available resources.

The CRP reviewed and discussed the CFSR and the Wisconsin PEP preparing to assist the state in the PEP implementation.

Last year, the CRP spent eight months reviewing and working with the county to complete the Child Welfare Assessment Tool required by the state. It is interesting to note that Marathon County has the highest number of substantiated Emotional and Sexual Abuse reports and the highest rate of overall substantiation at 34.4% as compared to the state rate of 29.7%. However, when looking at comparison counties we have the lowest rate of resulting out-of-home care.

In response to the survey results, the Panel has formed several small work groups which are looking at PR/PI initiatives, foster care rate structure, Marathon County's "Home Along" policy, and a program from St. Paul Minnesota (WAKENHEZA), intended to bring some community "ownership" to parenting challenges. A key issue has been to understand and identify what education would be helpful to the general public to assist them in understanding child welfare issues.

The focus for 2004 will be to implement new requirements for Citizen Review Panels and to work with the state to identify how we can be most useful in assisting with the implementation of the Wisconsin PEP, consistent with the CAPTA requirements for Citizen Review Panels.

State of Wisconsin  
7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District  
Citizen Review Panel  
Final Report  
2003

This panel was set up as a pilot project . The early meetings focused on training and orientation and then the Panel moved on to developing a mission statement and objectives. After a strong start, the Panel struggled with identifying how to address making recommendations for improvements/policy changes to five different county child welfare systems. Focus and attendance became a challenge. After lengthy discussions, it was decided that LaCrosse County (the most populous county in the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District) would assume responsibility for the Citizen Review Panel. LaCrosse County had expressed an interest in having a panel and a willingness to share suggestions, improvements, etc with the other counties of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit CRP was disbanded in early 2003.

The members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Citizen Review Panel appreciated the opportunity to serve on the Panel and learn more about the child welfare system. They will continue to be strong advocates for children, particularly as it relates to their right to grow up in a safe and loving permanent family.

**LaCrosse County Citizen Review Panel**  
2003 Annual Report

LaCrosse County's Family Policy Board has assumed the duties and responsibilities of the Citizen Review Panel. It is comprised of a Governing Council and a Management Council and looks at all of the children's issues in the county. It is made up of heads of agencies, law enforcement, a judge, and schools and will include consumers and other community members. It looks at all issues relating to the welfare of children in LaCrosse County.

The Panel has spent its first meetings on organizational issues and receiving orientation and training on the role and responsibility of citizen review panels. In addition, time was spent reviewing CFSR.

The Family Policy Board is pleased to have the opportunity to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the CRP. The focus for the upcoming year will be ensuring compliance with the newest CAPTA requirements for Citizen Review Panels and working with state staff to identify how the Panel can be most useful in the implementation of Wisconsin's PEP.

**OUTAGAMIE COUNTY  
CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL  
YEARLY UPDATE  
2003**

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In the past year, Outagamie County's Citizen Review Panel was involved in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Members had participated in the 2002 Mock Review and the actual Federal Review in August of 2003. Panel members reviewed information gained from the focus groups and will be involved in monitoring a Program Enhancement Plan established by the Department of Health and Human Services. A "county kick-off" was held in April of 2003 and all members were invited to attend.

In 2003, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between Harbor House Domestic Violence Center and Outagamie County Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protective Services. Members of the panel participated in writing and reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding which is being used as a model for the State of Wisconsin.

Members of the panel continued to work on, and be updated on, the Child Advocacy Center. Policies and procedures were written and the Child Advocacy Center through Children's Hospital will begin services on July 1, 2004.

April was Child Abuse Prevention and Crime Victim Awareness month. Panel members, along with community agencies, sponsored a Crime Victim Awareness week. A coloring contest was held for child abuse and neglect prevention and blue ribbons were distributed throughout the county.

As a result of a child's death case, panel members discussed possible changes in policies and procedures that the county Child Protective Services Division has made.

A panel member from the Oneida Nation presented a series of Oneida Child Welfare videos for members to view. These Oneida-specific videos were created in conjunction with a parenting manual.

A representative from the State Department of Health and Family Services gave an overview of changes in the State level with a new secretary and division manager for the Department of Health and Family Services. The representative also distributed CAPTA Requirements and discussed Wisconsin's plan to the Federal Government.

dd

Document ID #: 165272

## **Tribal Priorities for Indian Child Welfare Services in Wisconsin**

### DCFS Preface to Tribal Child Welfare Priorities

The attached document describes the seven priorities for Tribal Child Welfare services developed by Wisconsin's 11 federally-recognized tribes in conjunction with the Department of Health and Family Services. These seven tribal priorities were developed through bimonthly meetings of DCFS staff and the Department Tribal Affairs Unit with representatives of the Indian Child Welfare departments of each of the 11 tribes. The work on the tribal priorities began in the Summer of 2003 and the attached document reflects the joint efforts of the tribes and Department staff through February 2004. The attached document is the same version that was attached to the Wisconsin Program Enhancement Plan (PEP) in April 2004.

The tribal priorities document is a "living document" that will continue to develop into specific action plans for each of the priorities. DCFS is committed to using the document as a strategic plan for collaborative efforts with the tribes to improve Indian Child Welfare services in Wisconsin.

As discussed earlier in the Child and Family Services Plan, the current tribal child welfare workgroup will comprise the sixth focus committee of the Program Enhancement Implementation Team. The seven tribal priorities at this time do not include target dates for completion of goals. These target dates will be developed by the tribal child welfare committee through internal discussion and through communication with the other focus committees, to assure coordination with related PEP activities.

DCFS is in the process of filling a new Indian Child Welfare Consultant position in the Bureau of Programs and Policies. The new staff position will work with the tribal child welfare committee to implement the priorities and address other Indian child welfare issues, will greatly enhance the ability of DCFS to establish target dates and accomplish actions in a timely manner.

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 1: Identifying Children as Indian Children

#### Issue Statement

Too often, children are not being identified as Indian children, either at all or at some point later in the child welfare process than should occur. In some cases, if a child does not have an Indian name or does not “look Indian,” it is assumed that the child is not Indian. Child welfare practice should be altered so that all children are assumed to be Indian until it is determined that they are not.

#### Outcome Objective

By \_\_\_\_\_, active efforts shall be made, at the point of entry into the child welfare system and at appropriate subsequent points:

- to determine if a child or a member of the child’s family is Indian
- to determine what the tribal affiliation is, and
- to notify the appropriate tribe or tribes of the child’s involvement in the child welfare system.

This is required by the Indian Child Welfare Act and must be done so that tribes can make informed decisions regarding their desire to be involved, and at what level, with the case.

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Statewide tool or screen to assist in assuring appropriate questions are asked (check with Montana, NICWA, and Oregon).	Developed by DHFS in collaboration with tribes, counties, and the Court Improvement Program. Utilized by DHFS (adoption) and county staff, and child placing agencies.		
Directory of federally-recognized tribes in Wisconsin and tribal contacts for use by agencies with instructions and technical assistance. Also list BIA regional office for tribes outside of Wisconsin.	Developed by DHFS in collaboration with tribes. Utilized by same agencies as above.		
Specificity of ICWA requirements and sanctions for violations of requirements; draft legislation provided to tribes for comment and suggested revision.	Developed by DHFS in collaboration with tribes and counties.		
Develop a statewide form/template to be used to submit to tribes to determine if the child is covered under ICWA.	Developed by DHFS in collaboration with tribes and counties.		
Provide tribes with access to WiSACWIS.	DHFS in collaboration with tribes.		

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 2: Training on ICWA, Tribal Codes/Ordinances, and Cultural Issues

#### Issue Statement

Staff and administrators of a variety of child welfare agencies and organizations do not have adequate knowledge of the intent and content of the ICWA that supports the implementation of the law in either legal or practice situations.

Staff of the Department, the DOC Division of Juvenile Services, counties, private agencies, and tribes, and legal staff (e.g., judges, Guardians ad Litem, District Attorneys/Corporation Counsel) require ongoing training related to the content of the Indian Child Welfare Act and implications for implementation in Wisconsin. All training should include an Indian co-trainer.

#### Outcome Objective

By \_\_\_\_\_, all training participants listed above will demonstrate an understanding of the philosophical and legal concerns around removal of Indian children from their homes, placing Indian children in out-of-home care, terminating parental rights, and placing Indian children for adoption, all recognizing that there are differences among tribes.

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Require training on the above curricula and require an 80% score in order to be certified as completing ICWA training. [Ref. s. 48.981(8)(d), Stats.]  Include juvenile justice staff in this requirement. [Ref. Ch. DOC 399, Adm. Code]	DHFS and DOC requirement. Applicable to DHFS, DOC, county staff, and child placing agency staff. To be developed in collaboration with the Department of Corrections, tribes and counties.		
Develop training curricula related to the above.	Training Partnerships, DHFS, Counties, Tribes		
Incorporate ICWA into appropriate state statutes and administrative rules.	DHFS in conjunction with counties and tribes.		
The University of Wisconsin schools of social work and related programs should include a component on ICWA required for completion of the degree.	DHFS, DOC, UW, Vocational/Technical System, counties, tribes, Training Partnerships.		
Require that staff and management of counties obtain available training from tribes with which they predominantly work on the laws, customs, and culture of that tribe/those tribes.	Tribes, counties, and Training Partnerships.		
Incorporate into state licensing rules that licensed agencies must coordinate/may not impede* the cultural, religious, and spiritual beliefs of tribes. *For further discussion	DHFS, counties, and tribes		

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 3: Adoptions

#### Issue Statement

Tribes are not always involved in cases involving Indian children and the decisions that affect the outcome of the case, including removal from the home, placement in out-of-home care, termination of parental rights, and adoption. As a result, Indian children may experience outcomes that are not in the best interest of either the child or the tribe or both.

#### Outcome Objective

By -----State DHFS and County Staff and Managers, Private Agency staff, and Legal Counsel must involve tribes in all planning, implementation, and evaluation related to removal from the home, placement in out-of-home care, termination of parental rights, and adoptions to enable Indian children to experience positive measurable outcomes in adoptive services.

This includes the legislative intent of the ICWA relative to paternity and determination of the best interests of the child as defined in the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, and assessing the appropriateness of adoptive placements.

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Provide technical assistance on and strengthen laws and policies regarding efforts to determine paternity, including DNA testing.	DHFS in conjunction with counties and tribes.		
Require documented proof of the Indian heritage of potential adoptive families.	DHFS in conjunction with tribes and counties.		
DHFS will contract with tribes to administer all adoptions involving Indian children.	DHFS in conjunction with tribes.		
Adoption home studies and agreements should specifically state how the child's Indian heritage will be preserved.	DHFS, tribes and counties.		
Provide tribes with listing of DHFS contract agencies doing special needs adoptions.	DHFS		



## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 4: 161 Agreements

#### Issue Statement

161 agreements were created pursuant to 1983 Wisconsin Act 161 and were designed to identify the responsibilities of each agency in terms of the funding of placements of children ordered by tribal courts. Problems encountered by Tribes in using 161 Agreement have included:

1. Counties refusing to enter into a 161 Agreement
2. Counties entering into a 161 Agreement and not fully complying with the terms

Over the years, additional issues have been added to 161 Agreements, including identification of which agency will determine IV-E eligibility, which agency will develop and implement case plans, which agency will develop and review permanency plans, etc. In addition, it has been recommended that these agreements also include other child welfare related determinations (e.g., how CPS investigations will be handled) and the inclusion of juvenile justice cases.

In recent times, other issues have arisen, such as the implications of either party not signing the agreement and the lack of sanctions for not abiding by the agreement. In addition, there has been much discussion regarding whether the agreements should be between tribes and the state rather than tribes and counties.

#### Outcome Objective

By April 15, 2004, counties, in collaboration with DHFS, will consult with tribes to assess the effectiveness of the collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation of 161 Agreements and implement any corrective action that may include continuance, modification, or elimination.

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Define the content of 161 Agreements.	DHFS, tribes and counties		
Consider establishing a direct state-tribal relationship for placement funding.	DHFS, tribes and counties		
Establish a grievance process and sanctions for non-compliance with 161 Agreements.	DHFS, tribes and counties		
Identify implications of either a county or a tribe not signing a 161 Agreement.	DHFS, tribes, counties, DOJ		
Include measurable outcomes in 161 Agreements that include timelines and commitment of funds for services.	DHFS, tribes and counties		
Include "full faith and credit" language for tribal-licensed foster homes in 161 Agreements and Ch. HFS 56, Adm. Code.	DHFS, tribes and counties		
Consider replacing 161 Agreements with Tribal/County or Tribal/State child welfare agreements that are more comprehensive	DHFS, tribes and counties		

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 5: Foster Home Placements and Resources

#### Issue Statement

*Currently, there is some disagreement regarding the authority of tribes under the Indian Child Welfare Act to license foster homes outside of the boundaries of reservations or public trust lands. Our statutes and administrative rules are silent on this issue. There should be official determination of whether this authority exists or does not exist and that determination should be formalized in either statute or administrative rule.*

There have also been some concerns related to “**full faith and credit**” not being given by counties and adoption agencies to foster homes licensed by tribal agencies. To a certain extent, this is due to the fact that tribes may, but are not required to, use the Wisconsin foster home licensing administrative rule.

As well, there is disagreement among counties, and between some counties and DHFS, as to whether relatives may be licensed as foster parents at the discretion of that relative. There is no question that relatives do not need to be licensed to care for a child, but they must be licensed if they wish to receive a foster care payment rather than a Kinship Care payment.

#### Outcome Objective

By April 15, 2004, DHFS will consult with tribes to establish a State Statute or Administrative Rule recognizing “**full faith and credit**” of the tribal licensing process and foster placement costs “on or off/near” the reservation.

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Clarify state statutes regarding whether relatives may apply for and be granted a foster home license when a child has been placed with them by court order.	DHFS and counties		
Clarify the authority of tribes to license foster homes on reservation or public trust lands and determine whether this authority extends to homes off of the reservation or public trust lands.	DHFS		
Include “full faith and credit” language for tribal-licensed foster homes in 161 Agreements and Chs. HFS 56 and 38, Adm. Code.	DHFS, tribes, and counties		
Training for county and private agency staff on laws, rules, etc. related to licensure and “full faith and credit.”	DHFS, tribes		

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 6: Title IV-E Funding for Tribes

#### Issue Statement

Tribes can not receive Title IV-E funds directly from the federal government. The federal government is developing a proposal under which a state can opt to receive Title IV-E funds as a block grant rather than an entitlement. Under that proposal, it is clear that the federal government would provide IV-E funds directly to tribes. In addition, other federal legislation has been introduced that would allow tribes to receive Title IV-E funds directly.

In addition, at least some Wisconsin tribes would prefer to have a Title IV-E funding relationship with the state rather than the county(ies) in which they are located.

Tribes in Wisconsin support the legislation proposed by Senator Baucus that allows tribes to contract directly with the federal government.

#### Outcome Objective

By February 15, 2005, enter into a collaborative agreement that allows tribes to contract directly with the State Of Wisconsin for Federal Fiscal Year 2006 Title IV-E funds that may include:

1. Maintenance Costs
2. Training Costs for Child Welfare Staff and Foster Parents,
3. Administrative Costs

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
Research the implication for Tribes of federal regulations on the provision of Title IV-E funds directly to tribes by the federal government.	DHFS and Tribes		
Consider establishing a direct state-tribal relationship for Title IV-E funding.	DHFS, Tribes and Counties		

## TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE ISSUES

### Priority Number 7: Safety of Children in Their Own Homes and in Out-of-Home Care

#### Issue Statement

DHFS has, in recent years, developed policies and provided technical assistance and consultation to county agencies on the concepts involved with the safety of children, including in-home family-managed safety plans, in-home agency-managed safety plans, and out-of-home care. Similar efforts should be undertaken to assure that tribal child welfare agencies are aware of these safety concepts and practices.

Agencies providing services to Indian children must be aware of the higher standard of “active” efforts to prevent unwarranted removal of Indian children from their homes and the court-ordered plan for reunification of children with their families, including the appropriateness of reunification conditions. This concept must be considered when establishing, implementing, and evaluating both family-managed and agency-managed in-home safety plans and both prior to and after any placement of the child in court-ordered Kinship Care or other type of out-of-home care.

#### Outcome Objective

*By July 1, 2004, Tribes and Counties will enter into collaborative planning, implementation, and evaluation of measurable services related to the safety plans for Indian children in their own homes, in court-ordered Kinship Care, and in out-of-home care.*

#### Action Steps

Action	By Whom	PEP Reference	Other Reference
DHFS, counties, and tribes should confer on the development, implementation, and evaluation of all types of safety plans, including plans for reunification.	DHFS, counties, tribes, private consultants		
County agencies must provide the earliest possible notification to tribes when a referral on an Indian child is received, when a case is opened, and at other required steps in the case process.	Counties		
Tribal child welfare staff should attend safety training (including content and use of tools to determine safety) designed specifically for ICW staff.	DHFS, Tribes, Training Partnerships		

**Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare  
Corrective Action Plan for Jeanine B. v. Doyle Period 1 Settlement Agreement  
June 7, 2004**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to identify and describe the corrective actions the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) is taking and plans to take to address the following three Settlement Agreement provisions where compliance was not achieved during Period 1:

1. I. B. 4: requires that no more than 40% of children in BMCW out of home care shall be in care for more than 24 months. (BMCW achieved 44.2%)
2. I. B. 7: requires that at least 20% of children for whom an adoption is finalized within the period shall exit BMCW out of home care within 24 months of entry into care. (BMCW achieved 14.2%)
3. I.D. 9: requires that at least 80% of children in out of home care within the period shall have three or fewer placements after January, 1999, during their current episode in BMCW custody. (BMCW achieved 75.9%)

**Summary of Achievements**

The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare has demonstrated good faith efforts in meeting the terms of the Settlement Agreement during Period 1. For nine of the 12 required provisions, BMCW met or exceeded the performance standards in the following areas:

1. ASFA timeliness requirements. BMCW achieved 76.8% compared to the requirement that at least 65% or above of children in BMCW custody reaching 15 of the last 22 months in out of home care during the period shall have had a TPR petition filed on their behalf, or an available ASFA exception documented in their case, by the end of the 15 month in care.

BMCW achieved 88.5% compared to the requirement that 75% or above of children in BMCW custody more than 15 of the last 22 months in out of home care without a TPR previously filed or an available exception previously documented shall have had a TPR petition filed on their behalf, or an available ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the period.

2. Face to face contacts with children in out of home care by their case managers; BMCW achieved 90% year to date average. The requirement was 90% or above.
3. Reduction in caseloads of ongoing case managers to an average of 11 families per case manager per site; BMCW achieved a year to date average of 9.8 families per case manager. The requirement was an average of 13 families per case manager per site.

4. Timeliness in processing referrals of abuse and neglect to the independent investigation agency; BMCW achieved 99.8% compared to a requirement of 80% or above to refer reports of abuse and neglect from BMCW intake to the independent investigation agency within three business days.
5. Timeliness in making case assignments and completing independent investigations; BMCW achieved 99.6% compared to the requirement of 80% or above for the independent investigation agency to make an assignment to a staff person within three business days of the independent investigation agency's receipt of the referral. BMCW achieved 97.6% compared to the requirement of 80% or above, for independent investigations to be completed within 60 days of receipt by the independent investigation agency.
6. Reducing substantiation of abuse and neglect of children in out of home care; BMCW achieved 0.57% compared to the requirement that no more than 0.70% of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect allegations by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed.

The BMCW successfully completed the phase out of temporary shelters by December 31, 2003 as required; we implemented the use of Adolescent Assessment Centers for youth 12-18 years of age who are entering out of home care, and Placement Stabilization Centers for youth already in care who experience a placement disruption.

### **Strategies for Quality Improvement and Compliance**

To build on the outcomes already achieved and the demonstrated progress being made, the BMCW will take the following steps to address the three elements where full compliance was not met in Period I:

- A. Length of stay in Out of Home Care for more than 24 months (I.B.4)  
Target 40% or below. Bureau 2003 year to date performance was 44.2%.

#### **Action:**

1. Site specific monitoring will continue to track the length of stay of children in out of home care within each supervisory unit. Reports of child specific information regarding length of stay are generated through a monthly data report run by the Data and Reports PEM, and sent to all case management sites for their review and site specific tracking. Data is separated by 6 month intervals and is in a user-friendly table that is separated by supervisory unit at each site.
2. Full implementation of the Coordinated Service Team (CST) process will occur at each site. All families will have opportunities at least quarterly to meet with their CST and discuss progress toward permanency. The BMCW protocol for CST meetings requires a CST meeting to occur at least once every quarter for all open family cases, to coincide with the required quarterly family assessment. For newly open family cases, the first CST meeting is held within 15 days of the court

detention hearing. Timelines are tracked in WiSACWIS by the supervisor and are verified by PEMS as part of contract compliance. A standardized letter is used by all Bureau staff to notify parties of the CST meeting. Training on the values, purpose and benefits of CSTs was provided to all case managers, supervisors and managers between October 2003 – March 2004. The training was facilitated by 2 trainers from Wraparound Milwaukee who are using curriculum that BMCW helped to design. Advanced training on facilitation of CST meetings is being held to provide more specialized content between April 2004 – July 2004.

3. Under state leadership each site will consistently staff and track permanency goal progress every three months. Site specific staffings will be implemented to actively assess the reunification strategies for families to ensure their cases are on track. Staffing for the three month reviews will be site based and facilitated by the state employed site managers of that respective site and the PEM, in collaboration with the contract partner team of selected staff and managers. The selection of cases includes children who are in care at least 9 months, with the first priority of cases being those who have an upcoming 12 month permanency review by the Court. In-service training will be provided to all staff on the case review protocol and preparation for the staffing.

Timeline: Complete protocol development by June 15, 2004

Conduct staff in-service on protocol week of June 28, 2004

Implement staffings July 1 – 31, 2004

4. Adoption staff consultants will join the CST process to ensure effective concurrent planning and as a formal reminder that reunification cannot continue as a primary goal if progress toward reunification is not occurring.
5. CHIPS Assistant District Attorney (ADA) staff will independently and formally review cases in the system at 9 months – 12 months in care to determine if TPR filing is appropriate, thereby expediting the identification of TPR cases instead of just responding to those cases referred by Bureau case managers for TPR. Cases identified by the DA in this process may be moved directly to the TPR track. The District Attorneys will review cases for potential filing of a TPR of when the Bureau staff submits a request to the Court for an extension of the CHIPS court order. These dates occur at 12 month intervals.
6. The Bureau and court personnel will implement Fast Track TPR procedures for new cases entering the system that fit the criteria. Those cases will be tracked and monitored separately. The Assistant District Attorneys are using the federal fast track criteria as described in the 45 C.F.R. §1356.21(i) They include cases wherein: 1) A court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the parent has been convicted of: a) murder of another child of the parent; b) voluntary manslaughter of another child of the parent; c) aiding or abetting, attempting, conspiring or soliciting to commit such a murder or such a voluntary manslaughter; or d) a felony assault that results in serious bodily injury of the

child or another child of the parent; or 2) a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the parental rights of the parent with respect to a sibling have been terminated involuntarily; or 3) a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the child is an abandoned infant. Under these circumstances the petition to terminate parental rights must be filed within 60 days of the judicial determination unless an exception applies....” The second type of fast track are cases identified by the intake District Attorneys as part of the detention hearing preparation, including children 3 years old and younger who are entering the child welfare system.

A TPR Assistant District Attorney is assigned at Children’s Court to track the progress of the case in the CHIPS system. The paper cases are also flagged with a color coded form for visual purposes.

7. Under State leadership all cases of children who have been reunified with family but have an open court order of supervision will be staffed and reviewed to determine if their cases can be safely closed, thereby achieving permanency. Staffings will be site based, and facilitated by the state employed site manager of the respective site and the PEM. The Data and Report PEM generates a WiSACWIS report of all children reunified within the last 12 months with an open Court order. Selection criteria for staffing includes cases where reunification occurred at least 90 days ago.

Timeline: Complete review protocol by June 15, 2004  
Conduct staff in-service on protocol by week of June 21, 2004  
Implement staffings July 1 – July 31, 2004

8. Under state leadership at each site, Bureau staff will review the cases of children placed with relatives to determine if cases can be closed either via transfer of guardianship or by adoption. Identified cases include those where reunification has been eliminated as an option, and the placement has been stable for at least 12 months. Based on the results of the review, appropriate follow up will be taken to ensure permanency for each of the children. Case staffings will be site-based, and will be convened and facilitated by the state employed site manager of the respective site and the PEM. Tracking of cases is generated from a WiSACWIS report produced by the Data and Reports PEM. The report is sent to each site for specific follow up by the supervisor and program managers in supervisory work units. Follow up monitoring will be done by the assigned program PEM.

Training regarding transfer of guardianship and adoption has been provided as part of required core training for Bureau staff and the Bureau legal counsel; additional in-service sessions will be held as part of the current corrective action.

Timeline: Complete case review protocol by June 15, 2004  
Conduct staff in-service on protocol during week of June 21, 2004  
Implement staffings July 1 – 31, 2004



**B. Adoption within 24 months of entry into care (I.B.7)**

Target 20% of children. The Bureau's year to date performance was 14.2%. During calendar year 2003 the BMCW had 585 adoptions finalized, more than any previous year. Although record numbers of adoptions were completed, many of these children had been in out of home care placements for more than 24 months. Thus, the following strategies will focus on finalizing adoptions sooner for children:

**Action:**

1. Site based adoption consultants will identify children who potentially may be adopted as early as possible in the life of the case and provide technical assistance to case managers about the adoption process. Adoption consultants will identify children who may be candidates for adoption. The protocol for involvement of adoption staff with case managers staff are monthly site based meetings convened by the assigned site based adoption consultant from Children's Service Society (CSSW). They use the Adoption and Safe Families (ASFA) tracking information to identify children for staffing. The Bureau's dispute resolution procedure is to be followed if there are areas of disagreement among staff.

Timeline: Full implementation starting June 30, 2004.

2. A joint home study process is being implemented to expedite completion of the adoption homestudy for foster families adopting the foster children in their care. This will eliminate the need for a separate adoption home study. The joint homestudy protocol will be implemented by adoption staff for foster parents who are adopting foster children already in their care. The protocol calls for updates to the existing foster home study instead of having so start an entirely new adoptive home study. For new foster parents, the protocol will be implemented as part of the initial licensing homestudy. The joint protocol does not change any training requirements for foster or adoption applicants.

Timeline: Implement week of June 28, 2004.

3. In cooperation with the Children's Court, the BMCW has made a one year commitment to fund a full time position housed at the court to provide counseling and information for birth parents about the Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) process. The Permanency Counselor position was implemented April 12, 2004. The goal is to have a less adversarial process and more voluntary terminations. This should reduce time to complete TPRs and reduce contested cases and jury trials, which have caused significant delays in finalizing adoptions. Referrals to the Permanency Counselor are made by the case manager or by the Judge during a court hearing. A copy of the Bureau's contract regarding this position, and the first monthly activity report from the position are attached. (Attachment 1, 2 and 3)
4. In cooperation with the CHIPS District Attorneys, Bureau staff will implement Fast Track TPR procedures to identify new children entering care who are most

appropriate for and would be most likely to best fit criteria for adoption (especially infants and children three years of age and younger). This will reduce time to adoption for selected children. These cases will be tracked separately to expedite the TPR process.

Timeline: Starting June 2004

5. Focused and specialized attention will be provided to educate relatives about adoption as a permanency option. The Bureau will target relatives caring for children who are in stable placements, and where reunification is not an option. Adoption consultant staff will team with case managers to meet with relatives, discuss individualized case issues, and objectively inform relatives about the benefits and realities of adoption. Specialized adoption preparation and orientation sessions tailored for relatives will be implemented. Scheduling and presentation of the specialized adoption orientation sessions tailored for relatives will be done by assigned CSSW adoption managers. Input on the content will also be obtained from the BMCW Director and case management leadership staff. These sessions for relatives caring for children will replace the generalized orientation sessions traditionally provided for applicants interested in adopting. The content of the sessions will be provided under separate cover.

*Timeline: Complete content of orientation session materials by June 21, 2004*

Implement specialized adoption preparation and orientation for relatives starting July 7, 2004.

C. Placement Stability for children in out of home care (I.D.9)

Target: 80% of children in care shall have three or fewer placements.

The Bureau's year to date performance is 75.9%

**Action:**

1. Continue monthly face to face contact with children in out of home care by case managers to strengthen professional relationship, provide support to the child, and improve the quality of documentation about the visit and contact entered in WiSACWIS.
2. As a result of the more comprehensive assessments coming from the newly implemented family assessment homes and adolescent assessment centers, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) will have an enhanced ability to match children to the foster homes that can best meet their needs. This should result in a better match and fewer disruptions;

3. Intensified efforts are being implemented by LSS to develop and implement support and crisis plans for all foster families. Foster parents have current support plans to address their training and skill development needs. LSS is currently completing specific crises plans for each foster parent tailored to the children placed in their care.
4. Timeline: Crisis plans completed for existing foster home placements due July 1, 2004.

New child placements will have a crisis plan developed within 7 days of placement.

5. Respite plans and services will be increased to provide foster parents with additional support and stability. There is sufficient funding to cover respite and foster parent support needs. The Bureau is implementing a pilot with the Child Protection Center to provide mental health screening for new children entering out of home care

Timeline: Complete development of mental health screening tool by September 2004

Implement mental health screening pilot October 2004.

6. Full implementation of the CST process will be accomplished during calendar year 2004 to ensure that foster parents are included in all CST meetings. By December 2004 all existing foster parents will receive training on the values and importance of the CST process, and the role of the foster parent as part of the child welfare team. The Bureau's CST protocol was revised in March 2004 to specifically clarify the requirement of foster parents to be invited to CST meetings. Foster parent training on the CST process is being provided by Wraparound Milwaukee trainers under contract with BMCW. Once initial training of foster parents is completed, training for new foster parents on CSTs will be included in the required training for new foster parent applicants. That training is the responsibility of Lutheran Social Services as part of their contract with BMCW.
7. LSS is implementing geographic support groups for foster parents to strengthen communication, identify problems and ensure timely resolution of barriers that may interfere with placement stability. Geographic support groups for foster parents will be implemented by designated staff at LSS in the Foster Family Development section who are specifically responsible for this activity. Implementation will be tracked by the PEM assigned to the LSS contract. Timeline: Full implementation by October 2004.
8. LSS has implemented targeted recruitment efforts to increase placement options for adolescents, and children with emotional and physical concerns to ensure

better placement options. LSS will provide information to the Bureau on current and projected needs by July 2004. Status of the recruitment efforts and assessment of placement needs will be provided under separate cover by June 20, 2004.

9. BMCW Case managers and Licensing staff are conducting joint visits to foster homes to ensure better collaboration and placement stability for children. Case staffing meetings are being implemented to resolve issues.
10. In cooperation with Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), the Bureau's adoption program, pre-adoptive families are being identified for infants who are entering out of home care, to minimize the likelihood of a change in the placement if the child will be adopted. Matching and identifying of the child for a potential preadoptive family is the responsibility of the Placement section staff at LSS. Legal risk adoption issues are explained to the family by designated CSSW adoption staff.

Timeline: Already in process

#### **IV. Other Issues (as identified in your May 4, 2004 letter)**

##### **A. Workforce Issues**

The Bureau recognizes the importance of having competent, well trained, stable, child welfare staff. To that end we have taken the following steps to reduce staff turnover and increase retention:

An internal committee was convened by the Bureau Director on March 5, 2004 to discuss, analyze and identify short term (within 6 months) and longer term (6 –12 months) solutions to:

- ? reduce staff turnover
- ? recruit diverse and competent child welfare staff
- ? Retain staff across all Bureau programs.

The committee was also asked to identify strategies to:

- 1) understand why staff leave
- 2) understand why staff stay
- 3) use the findings from items 1 & 2 to support recruitment and retention of Bureau staff.

Committee Membership:

- ? Human resources staff from each contract agency (case management, adoption, out of home care;
- ? CEO or designee from each contract program:
- ? State employed Human Resources staff person
- ? State employed site manager and BMCW Deputy Director

Lessons learned:

- ? The committee was asked to build on the following information, experience, knowledge, and what we already know about BMCW staff turnover and workforce issues:
- ? Turnover of case managers is significantly higher (35% - 40%) in comparison to turnover of state employed, adoption and out of home care staff which is approximately 11%. Thus we need to focus on strategies to stabilize case management staff.
- ? Staff mentors implemented in 2001 for new ongoing case managers, have been helpful in the first 3-6 months of employment, and should be continued.
- ? Reduced caseloads (up to 50% in 2003) for ongoing case managers although helpful and necessary does not go far enough in resolving staff turnover of ongoing case management staff. Caseload reductions have not reduced staff turnover.
- ? Recruitment at career fairs, graduate schools of social work is effective in hiring recent graduates. However, the Bureau needs to target efforts to identify and recruit staff who have experience working in child welfare.
- ? Recent changes made to pre service training for new staff, to make the training more practical hands-on, have been well received by new staff.
- ? Role of supervisors is critical in staff retention. Recommended strategies have to target supervisors
- ? Once new case management staff complete pre service training, case assignments should continue to be phased in over time to allow new case managers time to learn the job.

As part of their assignment, both subcommittees were asked to include recommendations and strategies to standardize recruitment messages across all agencies, for a common format for exit interviews.

Preliminary Recommendations from the Committees received on April 23, 2004 include the following actions which we are in the process of refining:

- 1) Standardize the exit interview protocol (format, content and implementation) for all BMCW program areas. Analyze findings and implement recommendations to address patterns or issues identified by staff who are leaving BMCW.

Timeline: Implement use of format by July 1, 2004.

- 2) Conduct a survey of Bureau existing staff across all program areas to obtain current information about staff recruitment and retention issues, and to identify what staff need to maximize their success and tenure with BMCW.

Timeline: Develop draft survey by June 30, 2004.

Implement use of survey mid July – mid August 2004.

Analyze findings and prepare response by September 2004.

- 3) Implement targeted recruitment efforts toward more experienced social workers (strategies are still being identified) on how this will be done.

Timeline: Complete planning by June 1, 2004.

Implement: By July 1, 2004.

Longer term strategies include:

- 1) Seek consultation from the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). This request has already been made. We are in the process of scheduling times for consultation visits and phone conferences.
- 2) Convene a “Wingspread” type focused meeting discussion dedicated to child welfare workforce issues and potential solutions with a select group of invited participants. (We will keep you updated on our progress. We will also invite your participation in a planned conference on this issue.)
- 3) Developing and implementing specific strategies to support and strengthen the professional skill development of supervisors.

## **B. Medical and Dental Services**

BMCW has implemented a tracking system to ensure that new children entering out of home care receive a health screen at the Child Protection Center (CPC) within 5 days of removal from their home. The name of children are generated for tracking from the list of children detained. That list is shared with CPC and is matched with the names of children who are seen. If there are no shows or cancellations, CPC notifies BMCW and those children are rescheduled and tracked to ensure the medical appointment is kept.

A similar tracking system has been implemented to ensure that children already in out of home care are receiving ongoing medical and dental care. That data is tracked through a WiSACWIS generated report and monitoring by the PEMS.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for the managed health care for foster children will be released in mid-June 2004. The proposed managed health care system will increase the capacity for medical and dental health providers to see children in the Bureau’s custody.

## **C. Documentation**

Overall documentation in case files has improved across program areas. Currently, we are focusing on improving the quality of the documentation to ensure staff are more descriptive about the documentation they are entering in WiSACWIS. Training has been provided to staff in March and April 2004. In addition, enhancements are being made to WiSACWIS to provide more guidance and categories to guide case managers information needed for the file.

## **V. Evaluation of Progress and Follow-Up**

We believe that the strategies identified will be effective in making progress toward and reaching full compliance of the three provisions, however, we will formally evaluate and review performance to confirm the reality. Unless otherwise noted, the documented strategies are already underway. Progress will be reviewed monthly during already established risk management meetings at each site. Based on feedback and ongoing assessments, adjustments will be made. We will report progress to you on these three

provisions at the end of the first semi annual period; i.e., June 30 and monthly thereafter through December 31, 2004.